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1870-1871. The first year of the new century. The first year of the new century.

1871-1872. The second year of the new century. The second year of the new century.

1872-1873. The third year of the new century. The third year of the new century.

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1883-1884. The fourteenth year of the new century. The fourteenth year of the new century.

1884-1885. The fifteenth year of the new century. The fifteenth year of the new century.

1885-1886. The sixteenth year of the new century. The sixteenth year of the new century.

1886-1887. The seventeenth year of the new century. The seventeenth year of the new century.

1887-1888. The eighteenth year of the new century. The eighteenth year of the new century.

1888-1889. The nineteenth year of the new century. The nineteenth year of the new century.

1889-1890. The twentieth year of the new century. The twentieth year of the new century.

1890-1891. The twenty-first year of the new century. The twenty-first year of the new century.

1891-1892. The twenty-second year of the new century. The twenty-second year of the new century.

1892-1893. The twenty-third year of the new century. The twenty-third year of the new century.

1893-1894. The twenty-fourth year of the new century. The twenty-fourth year of the new century.

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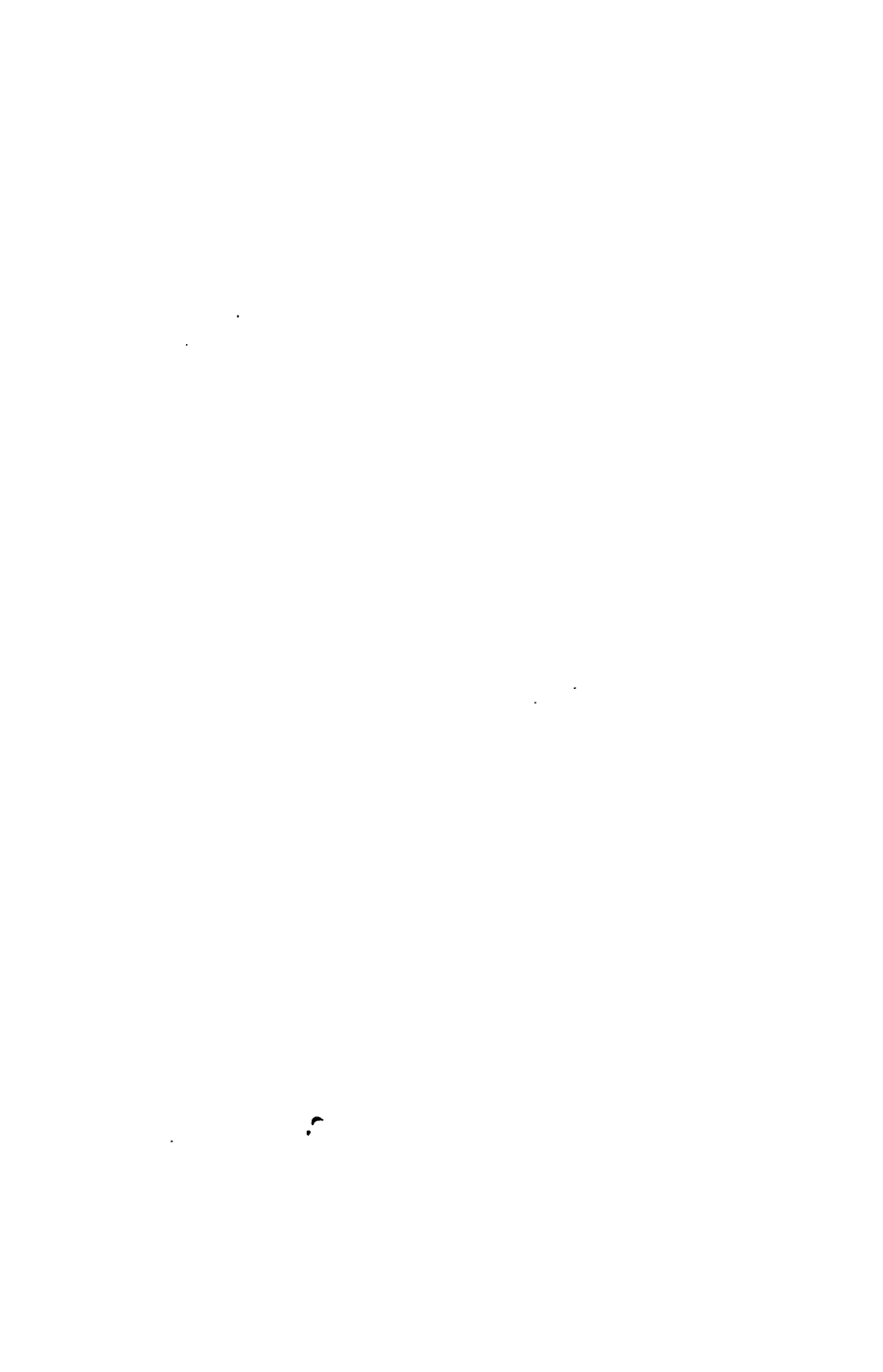
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FEATURES
OF
SOCIAL LIFE.



BY

MRS. PARKER,

AUTHOR OF "DECISION AND INDECISION."

LONDON:

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AND 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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M,DCCC,XXXVIII.

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A. PICKARD, PRINTER, TOP OF BRIGGATE.

P R E F A C E.

Among the varied forms of Literature daily issuing from the press, perhaps the designation of none will be more in unison with the pleasurable associations of *home* than the "Features of Social Life." Other titles may promise a wider range for imagination, and afford more ample scope to the powers of intellect; yet, in the simple annals of social life, we recognise the peculiar characteristics of our own friendly circle; we see the well-known traits developed in domestic scenes; and we hail the

sketch (rough though it be) of that fair-form, whose pure and heavenly mould, is the dearest object of our love.

That there are many publications, specially adapted for the young, the Author is fully aware; but that there are sufficient to satisfy that eager desire, produced by the enlightened state of mind and cultivated taste, now general in the middle ranks of life, she ventures to think questionable. The thirst for knowledge calls for boundless stores. The enquiring mind will read; and if books, whose tendency is good be not supplied, others of a more doubtful character will be sought. How many an opening bud of promise, has been blighted by the baneful influence thus acquired!

For the youthful part of her own sex, connected with the large and influential religious community of Wesleyan Methodists, the Author feels intense solicitude; for them she gladly employs her pen; and to them she presents the offering of a social wreath.

LEEK, March, 1838.

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INTRODUCTION.

VARIETY of size, colour, and property, in conformity with the distinguishing feature of design, is the Divine impress, which is stamped upon all the works of God. The artist's pencil and the poet's lyre have been strained to set forth the beauties of the varied landscape. But who can paint like Nature? The ever-shifting shadows and the pulse of life mock the power of art; we gaze upon the same objects a thousand and a thousand times, and still they are ever new; even while we gaze, the scene is changing: the deep-blue sky is covered with a fleecy cloud; the golden tinge upon the mountain-top retires; the yellow sward

deepens into emerald-green ; and the resplendent sunbeam flits and glitters upon the glassy lake. No dull uniformity is seen, no tedious monotony is heard, amid all the works of God. An infinite diversity of objects, with an endless variety of change, meet our desires for novelty, and invite our investigation of their latent cause ; while the adaptation of the provision to the wants of animal life, with the blending of each species by various gradations into perfect harmony, call for the most profound research. We leave the cold reasonings of philosophy, and the yet more freezing speculations of infidelity ; we look from nature up to nature's God ; and with devotion's glow we offer the tribute of grateful praise, " O Lord, how manifold are thy works ; in wisdom hast thou made them all ! "

Consistently with the visible display of the works of God, the capacities of mind, as well as the influence of the passions, are marked with variety. Not

one of all the family of man but is identified with peculiar habits, faculties, or circumstances. Each individual has some distinctive characteristic, some inherent principle, some relative connection by which he is distinguished from his fellow-creatures. Members of the same family, and even those linked together by the ties of birth and sex, evince a dissimilarity in taste, talent, and disposition. With minds differently constituted, it is impossible for each voluntarily to pursue the same object: the natural bent of inclination leads to diverse paths; and what appears desirable to one, possesses no attractions to the other. Hence arises an endless diversity of pursuits and employments, from the towering flights of genius to the puerile amusements of the half-closed intellect. Scope is found in the various departments of science for the development of every degree of capacity; opportunity is given for all to excel in their respective spheres; and as in nature

shade softens into shade and yet preserves its distinctive form, so the varied gradations of intellectual power combine to render harmonious the peculiar traits of widely different pursuits.

Nor is the garden of the Lord, the dispensation of grace, destitute of the varied hue, the change in growth, and the unequal proportion of fragrance and beauty. "In the grand and essential features of Christian experience, the whole household of God possess a universal sameness of character, a family likeness, which distinguishes them from all the world besides; yet, in numerous particulars there also exists a beautiful variety. On the one hand, in the old and the young, in the wise and the unlearned, in the rich and the poor; in those of stronger and weaker degrees of mental capacity, in more sanguine or more sedate dispositions; and in a multitude of otherwise varying circumstances, there is a striking conformity of principles and feel-

ing to Christ, and to each other. Like the flowers of the field they are all rooted and grounded in the same soil of the same earth; they are warmed by the same sun, refreshed by the same air, and watered by the same dews. They each derive nourishment, growth, and increase from the same life-giving source. As the flower puts forth its leaves and petals, adorns the place which it inhabits with its beauty, and possesses an internal system of qualities, whereby it is enabled to bring forth its seed or fruit, in the appointed time; so does the Christian. But, on the other hand, like the flowers also, some Christians may be said to grow on the mountain-tops, some in the valleys, some in the waters, and others in dry ground. Different colours, forms, and sizes distinguish them from each other, and produce a diversity of character and appearance, which affords a delightful variety, both for the purposes of use and beauty.”*

* Legh Richmond.

True it is, that the manifestation of pardoning mercy and the influence of divine grace uniformly produce the same relative and renovating change, so that a fixed and unalterable standard is maintained by which to judge of character and to regulate practice. But that a kind of individual peculiarity, analogous to the distinguishing traits of character, marks the operations of grace upon the soul, no one will attempt to deny. This arises not from the reception of different truths, but from a different perception of the same truths. In order to stimulate various individuals to the same conduct, we find, that, in one, we have only to appeal to his sense of duty—in another to his love of approbation—while, in a third nothing will make any impression except what bears upon his interest or his pleasure. A natural buoyancy of spirits intuitively admits those truths which excite the doubts and fears of more melancholic temperament; and a single testimony ob-

tains credence with the ingenuous, when an array of argument fails to convince the sophist. It is needless to enquire why the peculiar constitution of individuals is permitted to affect the mind with regard to spiritual things; or to wonder that all do not exhibit the same form of loveliness. Religion while it regulates the heart, leaves the physical constitution to its customary functions; while it purifies the affections, it allows the moral principles which actuate and govern the mind, to impart a sort of individuality distinguishable even in our conceptions of the Deity.

Nothing can be more surprising than that any one, conversant with human nature, should attempt to raise his own views and feelings, as a standard for those of others. As well might we expect to reduce the various orders of intellect, or the widely different circumstances of individuals to one common level, as to suppose it practicable for beings variously

modified to agree in the non-essentials of religion. Natural peculiarities *do*, and *will* exert a powerful influence; and it is needless to contend with those slight deviations from general maxims, which detract naught from personal happiness or the well-being of society. The Bible is the touchstone of right and wrong. To this test we bring our ideas, from this code we form our faith, and by this rule we regulate our lives. If the vital principles be found, so far from minor differences operating against the testimony of truth, they will render striking the more prominent Christian graces, and also tend by the development of intervening excellencies to display the harmony and beauty of genuine piety.

While making allowance for individual peculiarities, no indulgence however, can be given to that spirit of latitudinarianism which palliates evil. That which is morally wrong demands the severest censure. At the same time that charity

is portrayed adorned with all the loveliness of "hoping all things, believing all things, bearing all things," a holy jealousy prescribes the limits of her benevolence: "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The most pointed reproofs, the heaviest denunciations are levelled against those dispositions of the mind, and those affections of the heart, which are radically bad. No lenity can be shown to the depraved passions of human nature. With jealous care we would guard the susceptibilities of the heart being moved with *pity* for those defects in the moral constitution, which merit *condemnation*. The foibles of an unregenerate heart are errors of lasting importance. The deviations of corrupt nature lead unto the chambers of death.

No. I.

ANGER.

ENJOYING the pursuance of my own ideas, I sat down close by my table, and leaning my head upon my hand, I began to ruminate upon the miseries resulting from the indulgence of anger. I was in a frame of mind for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination.

I commenced with the wrath of princes, the disunion of churches, the distraction of families, and the disquietude of neighbourhoods, and found that to the fruitful source of ungoverned passion might be traced many of the scenes of public calamity and private distress which strike us with astonishment and horror; but though the picture was appalling, this general survey did not serve my purpose; it was too remote, I

could not bring it near, and the multiplication of calamity rather confused than aided me—

I took a single individual, one that memory recalled from the stage of active life, and having spread a trivial offence, I then looked for the expression of anger—

I beheld a lovely nymph suddenly changed into a fury, and felt a kind of terror which paralysed my intended expostulation. The previous silence was abruptly broken—the eyes which before had beamed intelligence now flashed fire—the playful smile was seen no longer, grinding teeth and quivering lips succeeded—and the vehement, high-raised voice dealing out abusive epithets, made the hand delineating these features, to tremble—

But here the honour for my sex was roused—to proceed further was impossible—I left the frightful visage to be finished by a sterner mind, and

began to sketch another part of the portrait.

She was sitting, bathed in tears, listening to reproof; the charge of ingratitude was preferred, and “do you thus requite a mother’s love!” filled her with remorse—by her side lay the pledges of sincere affection, given in softer hours, and now returned as unworthy of the sacred seal of friendship—numerous duties, left unperformed by the freakish banishment of a faithful servant, urged their claims—and with a load of unpardoned guilt, she smote her breast, and vainly wished that, ere the tempest rose—she had ceased to live. As I was witness of the storm, so also was I witness of the wreck it had occasioned—hopes blasted, friends lost, desolation felt, and misery entailed. I heard the self-accusing lamentations, which like the heavy swells left by the furious winds, troubled yet more and more the agitated breast; the deep-drawn sighs

•

echoed and re-echoed through the waste, as if mocking the remembrance of departed joys ; and drenched in tears, the signal of distress was hoisted, if perchance it might excite compassion. I saw the wreck of peace—I could not bear to gaze upon another's woe—I turned away to tranquillize my feelings.

happy medium between forwardness and diffidence. A bold assurance tyrannises over the feelings of others with insolence and contempt; a bashful spirit is sensitively alive to the infliction of injury without means for its redress; but modesty, though far removed from obtrusion, shrinks not from its proper sphere. It has courage to maintain its own rights, though not the effrontery to infringe upon those of others. Modesty is always lovely; especially so in youth. It tempers the more open and daring virtues with a refinement which secures honour and esteem, while to the fearful it imparts a vigour, the value of which is only known when felt, is only duly estimated when lost.

The timid, having no confidence in themselves, have little need to be repulsed either with offensive boasting or the ruthless hand of force; rather do they need the sympathy which feels and the kindness which allures. Encourage-

ment to them is *life*. They may be said to live no longer than while upheld by the soothing stimulus; exist they may, but 't is only to endure the torture of distress. Distrustful of their own powers, the claims of merit oft lie concealed until drawn out to view by some friendly hand, when the sterling excellence well repays the benevolence which elicited its development. More diffident than deficient, is the general characteristic of those, who prefer gathering a store from others, to displaying their own ideas.

Timidity, however, is not always to be looked upon as concealing merit; sometimes it is the cloak for vice. "We meet with instances of this, in people of depraved minds and mean education; who, though they are not able to meet a man's eyes, or pronounce a sentence without confusion, can voluntarily commit the greatest villainies, or most indecent actions."* Remorse and shame may

* Spectator.

produce a blush, the consciousness of guilt may give an embarrassed air. But the baseness of character is not attributable to the bashfulness with which it is associated; the individual who trembles like an aspen-leaf, possessing other tendencies of disposition, would be bold as Hector, or stupid as a mule.

Religion in establishing the law of God, does not reverse the law of nature; it leaves us in full possession of those natural dispositions which it improves and sanctifies, and so far from changing the tendencies of character, it seeks rather to direct and regulate them. Conversion effects no radical change in the constitution of the mind. A timid man will be a timid saint. But diffidence is no barrier to piety. It rather furnishes means conducive to its practical operations. Those habits of retirement, and that involuntary looking for interior comfort, which form the distinguishing outlines of this mental feature, are favour-

able, in no ordinary degree, to the life and power of godliness. The ardent, it is true, are most zealous, but they are not the most persevering. They start eagerly, march rapidly, and are full of confidence in their own strength; they too often judge others with little charity, and themselves with little humility; and if by continuance in the path they have chosen, they evince the sincerity of their zeal, advancement is only made by lessons of painful experience, in learning to distrust themselves. The diffident are generally patient and persevering. If their speed is less eager, it is more steady; as they know their own hearts more, they discover their deceitfulness, and depend upon a higher source for help; as they become more humble in spirit, they become more charitable in judgment; as they grow more firm in principle, they grow more exact in conduct.

As a counterbalance to the promise of continuance, the timid are particularly

subject to the influence of doubts and fears. When others are rejoicing in the sunshine of God's favour, they are in the obscuring-grey of their own mistrust ; when others are exulting on the mountain-top, they are meditating in the vale below. Involuntarily seeking the shade, their delight consists in acquaintance with its darkness and its depths. Those recesses of the heart wherein the fearful images of death exist, are by them explored, and to them the secret workings are revealed. They know the mystery of iniquity in the soul ; they feel the depravity of nature ; and they are led to doubt the renovation of the heart. Or, from proneness to ponder on their own imaginings, they acquire a morbid perception of their privileges ; the rich promises of the Gospel are viewed as applicable to all but themselves ; they alone are unworthy, they only are exempt from the covenant of grace. In proportion to the degree of natural timidity, will be

their hesitation in judging favourably of their state ; and not only are they influenced to think lowly of their attainments, but the future also is seen as through a glass darkly. A retrospective view of their adherence to the cause they love, is succeeded by an instinctive fear that soon they will be found among those who draw back to perdition ; if now reposing with confidence on the merits of their Saviour, the doubt of their final acceptance hovers near ; and when gaining spiritual conquests, they are still in bondage through the fear of death. The experience of thousands of our Israel, from this morbid sensibility, has suffered the loss of that joy and consolation which the Gospel sets forth as the privilege of believers. One illustration may serve to awaken the sympathies of Christians of more sanguine temperament, and thereby to extend that encouragement which the timid peculiarly need.

“We often censure, where, if we knew all, we should only pity!” exclaimed a friend, to whom Selina had been pouring forth her sorrows in order to relieve a heart surcharged with grief. And so it was. Selina was suffering from the harsh-judgment of one whose office it was “to carry the lambs of the flock,” or to “lead them into pastures of tender grass, and by the waters of quietness;” one to whom she looked for counsel and support; and one for whom she felt esteem and love. A less tender spirit might not have felt the cutting stroke, and to others cast in a yet stronger mould, it would have been the faithful warning needed; but to one so delicately formed, it was the hand of iron; the knife which scathed the finest fibres of the soul, and severed the hopes and aspirations of the heart. While some need reproof, others want encouragement; while some must be taught to be more diffident, it requires great pains to produce in others

more confidence. Harshness is not the method applicable for a timid character ; it is the sure way to “ break the bruised reed, to quench the smoking flax.” Never is the heart of tenderness broken by Jehovah ; the rock, the adamant is crushed, but the gentle spirit is sweetly drawn by the influence of love. This is a sublime lesson. The thunders of Sinai roll over the heads of the bold and daring, while the fearful are led to the melting scenes of Calvary. What is awful may repel, but it fails to confirm the feeble-knees. A display of the terrific, so far from stimulating forward, only makes the doubtful more dubious, and the distrustful more afraid.

Selina listened with attention to the experience related by individuals forming a section of the Christian church, anxious to recognise the peculiar features of her own state ; but though in the bolder outlines of distinction from the world she discovered resemblance, yet in the definite

and minute expressions of vital piety there was no kindred feeling by which she could claim affinity with the people of God. A true "Mother in Israel" expatiated on her anticipations of future blessedness; holy joy illumined her venerable countenance; and yielding to the influence of divine love, she was filled with gratitude and praise. A suffering saint could say, "Thy will be done:" submission had been learnt in the school of affliction; and meek, humble, and resigned, she was prepared to welcome the mandate of dismissal, but till her summons came she was content to suffer the will of God. An experienced Christian declared that a steadfast faith in God, through Christ, brought with it an establishment in peace and holiness, which rendered her victorious when assaulted by temptation, and kept her enemies beneath her feet. While the more recent convert rejoiced in the "spirit of adoption," and laid claim to being an "heir of God, and a joint-heir

with Christ Jesus." In such close connection with the excellent of the earth, Selina felt her own deficiencies. She rejoiced to contemplate the perfections of the Deity as seen in the mirror of true believers, and felt, that to reflect that glory would be her highest bliss and privilege ; yet her sense was proportionably poignant of her own infirmity, and of the imperfection of her most devoted services. With self-abasement, she exclaimed,

" I have nought wherein to trust,
I nothing have, I nothing am ;
Excluded is my every boast,
My glory 's swallowed up in shame."

" But yet," she continued, " my desires are unto God, and the remembrance of his name—I am one of those who hope in his mercy—I see the commands of God are exceeding broad, that they reach to the thoughts and intents of the heart ; and though I dare not wilfully transgress His law, yet innumerable deviations mark my course."

“Do not be deceived, my sister,” replied the leader of this little flock: “many shall *seek* but shall not *enter*. The road to hell is paved with *good desires*. Hoping in God’s mercy, has been the profession of thousands who are now irrecoverably lost; and if you escape, it will be by something more than this.”

The bluntness of this reply, together with its personal signification, sank like lead upon the ears of Selina. Alas, it was not the medicine for a broken heart! Warning she did not need, but encouragement; and so far from realising the comfort which a reposing confidence in the merits of her Redeemer, and leaving her unworthiness at the foot of the Cross would have afforded, this startling admonition drew more tightly the cords which bound the load upon her heart, and added weight to the discouragement already too preponderating. The sincerity which dictated this rebuff was not questioned; it

was a sincerity beyond suspicion ; but its very freedom from any thing deteriorating gave additional force to its expression. It is severe, but just, reasoned Selina ; my hopes had led me to the threshold of a false security ; faithfulness required that I should see my danger, and the elevation of my mind in anticipation of rest, is now proportionably depressed by the fallacy of those hopes. For me to speak of liberty when in thralldom, of an assurance when doubting, would be impious ; and simply to declare the truth, that I am only a seeker of salvation, is to open afresh the sluices of mental agony ; better is it, that I ruminate at home, than go elsewhere to find an accumulation of distress.

The first false premise of fallacious reasoning was adopted, when a judicious friend gently drew aside the assumed veil of reserve, and tenderly solicited the development of her feelings. It was opportunely done. The heart closed by terror,

yielded to love's resistless sway. She
was led

“By a way she knew not, into peace,
Which by its gentle voice, bade sorrow cease.”

No. III.

GENTLENESS.

“Simplicity she too was there ;
Nature’s first-born, so soft,
Yet so magnificent of mien,
She look’d all ornament
Without a gem.”

LETITIA was different from every other woman of her acquaintance. She did not dazzle—she subdued. Her associates were more commanding, more versatile, more acute ; but she was perfectly amiable. Her heart was pre-eminently formed to love ; her movements were her features ; and if a stranger were privileged to spend a day in her company he would be justified in saying that gentleness and a perception of delicacy, affection and a love of home, were the distinctive traits of her character. Nor would he be deceived.

Her childhood, her youth, but above all, her conjugal love and maternal tenderness, combined to pourtray the lineaments of feminine grace and piety. It was in the endearments of social life that she touched the chord of sensibility, and gave tone to the sympathies of the soul; it was in the domestic circle that she extended the influence of love—an influence more felt than seen. Her acquirements were extensive and varied, but true to the first principle of her nature, they were practical and influential; any thing extraneous or foreign was distasteful and repugnant. Her character was at once simple and profound: she was the child of nature, and the model of female excellence; there was no room in her mind for vanity, or in her heart for the world—the one was filled with sound judgment, the other with love. Her strength lay in the mild persuasive tone of her voice, in the patient resignation of her soul, and in the peaceful calmness of her spirit.

From the even tenour of her frame, you might be led to think her path through life was free from thorns; but her steps may be traced in prosperity and adversity, in suffering and trial, in affliction and bereavement. Scenes like these were familiar to her gentle spirit; they altered her outward attire, yet they ruffled not her moral features. She rested in the promises of God, she anticipated the felicities of heaven, she "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." I might describe, and describe for ever, but I should never succeed in portraying Letitia, save in one word, she was a *Christian*.

No. IV.

CENSORIOUSNESS.

"Laughs at the reputations she has torn
And holds them dangling at arms-length in scorn."

COWPER.

IN almost every circle the intermeddling busybody is found. A general desire to know the concerns of others, neutralises the dislike felt towards such a character; and the practice so far from being discouraged, is even countenanced by those who must inevitably suffer from such annoyance. The tale-bearer, viewed as a retailer of news and a help to discourse, is welcomed with smiles in almost every company, where, not only is the inlet to useful information obstructed by the rehearsal of common-place incidents, but a propensity to censure induced. Enquiries are afloat; private sentiments are brought

under review ; opinions are freely given ; the absent are taxed with wrong motives ; and their actions receive the sentence of condemnation.

It is true, that many persons indulge their loquacity in discussing the concerns of others, with no ill-intent, but simply from the love of talking ; and because when they have exhausted the weather and the compliments of the season, they are somewhat at a loss for a subject of conversation. Others, there are, more dangerous characters, since they exaggerate every thing they relate ; out of the least incident they can construct a tale, and every fact is embellished or magnified ; nothing is moderate or sober in the hands of such persons ; all they meet with is adventure, and on a small basis of truth they can raise a mighty superstructure of fiction. They are few who indulge their propensity of criticising their neighbours with an intention to injure them ; yet, it must be confessed, the

censoriousness of some may be compared to the bud containing within its folds the rudiments of the future blossom, and as the same lineaments may be traced in the shooting germ as in the expanded flower, so the constituent parts of slander are discoverable in the different stages of its growth.

The censorious are more or less deserving of blame, as they are influenced by the preceding motives; but whatever may be the cause of their animadversions, it should be considered, that the effect of them is equally prejudicial to the person at whom they are aimed; the injury is the same, though the principle from whence it proceeds may be different. Many characters have been frittered away by an undue use of epithets; the veil of misconstruction drawn by tattlers has separated friends; and the harsh-judgment of a fellow-worshipper has caused the fire of Christian love to wax dim upon the altar.

The more man becomes what he ought to be, the less acute and gratified will he be in marking or mentioning the failings of others. Allowance will then be given for peculiar habits and different circumstances; the mantle of love will conceal the infirmities of nature; and all will find safety in the appeal, "Is he not my brother?"

Perhaps the following simple illustration may prove a beacon, both admonitory and useful.

Mrs. Ely was the widow of a naval officer, residing with her only daughter in the vicinity of G——. A succession of painful dispensations revealed to an aspiring and ambitious mind, the mortifying truth, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Less ardency of temperament might not have felt so keenly the sorrow of its own disappointments: the spirit that is formed to take the highest upward flight, always expe-

riences the most sinking despondency. What, to many, would secure ease and contentment, was to Mrs. Ely the source of intense bitterness, simply because it offered nothing to supply the cravings of a heart formed only to appreciate and enjoy the utmost worldly gratification. A competency failed to please; a limited circle of friends was flat and wearisome; life had lost its attractions; and the heart was an empty, aching void. When thus rescued from the captivating influence of earthly charms, the truths of religion were felt in all their convincing power; remorse added poignancy to grief, and the tears of contrition succeeded the sighs for aggrandisement and wealth. The energy of character was discoverable even in the lowest depths of sorrow. No sooner was an object presented to her view, than former ardour was aroused, every thing was made to yield to the attainment of her desires, and she presently evidenced the peculiar traits of an "ear-

nest seeker of salvation." Nor was this manifestation of long continuance. The sorrow of repentance "endured but for a night, joy came in the morning;" "the spirit of heaviness was exchanged for the garment of praise;" and the weeping penitent was quickly lost in the transports of the believer.

As religion operates a moral not a physical change, and gives a new direction to constitutional tendencies without taking them away, Mrs. Ely was led by a peculiarity of disposition to activity and usefulness. Generous and prompt, both in speech and action, she became foremost in every enterprise of benevolence; and equally ready to stimulate the timid, and reprove the careless, she soon stood conspicuous for her decision of character and boldness in the cause she had espoused. The fears of several Christian friends were excited, lest the ardour of zeal should be mingled with a propensity to display, and the energy of

personal exertion leave the passive graces to wither and die. Nor was this fear altogether groundless; for acquired habits of dissipation and a prevailing desire for novelty, precluded in a great degree, retirement, self-communion, and reflection. But as the peculiarities of individuals are distinct and varied, so are they met with appropriate help; those supplies of grace necessary for the preservation of religion in the heart, which the generality of Christians receive in private devotion, are bestowed upon others, whose minds or circumstances are differently constituted, in the public sanctuary, or when engaged in deeds of charity. That Mrs. Ely's personal piety suffered no declension was evident from her not growing weary in well-doing; she still prosecuted her designs with alacrity, and was persevering, patient, and self-denying in the pursuance of her plans. And though the honest purpose was sometimes hid among the wild luxuriance of indis-

cretion, the blooming promise of conversion called for fostering kindness, and the improprieties arising from former errors claimed the exercise of candour.

But there was unhappily in the circle of religious friends, to which Mrs. Ely had united herself, a few who indulged their propensity to censoriousness. Instead of quietly examining their own hearts, they were perpetually discussing the spiritual state of others; and destitute of that charity which "thinketh no evil," their chief employment was criticising the motives and conduct of those around them. The leader of this class was Mrs. Howard, an elderly lady, and the last representative of a family, that had for many generations warmly espoused the cause of Christianity. Favoured in no ordinary degree with witnessing from her childhood the hallowing effects of religion in the consistent deportment of relatives, she so far yielded to the influence of holy example, as to identify her-

self with the saints upon the earth ; but neglecting to cultivate those principles in her heart which had been planted with solicitude, she continued wilfully ignorant of the nature of that renovating change which manifests itself in the life and characterises the true Christian. She was a mere nominal professor. The time which should have been self-devoted, was wasted upon others. Intolerant to every departure from her standard of duty, she was the first to note error, and assuming the office of censor in the social party, she would without hesitation, examine and arraign delinquents, and apportion their desert according to her extended views of rectitude.

It was on one of these occasions, that Mrs. Bond, the lady at whose house two or three friends were spending the evening, mentioned the circumstance of a poor widow residing in the neighbourhood, being the object of Mrs. Ely's profuse liberality.

“Generosity with prudence,” exclaimed Mrs. Howard, “is a virtue; without it, a vice!”

“It would be much better, in my opinion,” replied Mrs. Bond, “if Mrs. Ely would save a little out of her jointure and add to her daughter’s fortune.”

“But,” rejoined Mrs. Howard, “it is not to be expected that Mrs. Ely should trouble herself with thoughts of a future day; her husband showed his wisdom in not leaving his property at her disposal, for if that had been the case, both herself and daughter would soon have become paupers. We may perceive that her best actions are only governed by the impulse of the moment; if an impression is made, her heart is conquered; no matter how far distant reason and principle may be. For my part, I cannot reconcile such inconsistency with piety.”

“I think we must not question her piety,” replied Mrs. Bond, “for the change is obvious to all.”

“And she takes care that her *feelings* also shall be known to all,” returned Mrs. Howard, “such frequent repetition of her experience wearies me; even last Sunday, when I was returning from the chapel, disappointed and vexed at not having our regular preacher, she accosted me with her usual salutation, “Oh, what a delightful sermon! Has it not been a precious season?” I’m sure, no one less excitable than herself would have joined in her exclamation; and I cannot forbear suspecting this refined sensibility will soon evaporate.”

“I hope not,” said Mrs. Bond,” nor do I think there is any ground to fear, while she attends so constantly the means of grace.”

“I almost question,” replied Mrs. Howard, “whether death itself would keep her from a prayer-meeting; for I called upon her a few days ago, and found her wrapped in a flannel-gown distracted with tooth-ache and rheuma-

tism; but, forsooth, nothing must prevent her going to the vestry; and if she invites a few friends to tea, it is with this condition that they must leave her, or she leave them at the appointed hour. To me, such extremes are disgusting: the gay worldling in a few months outruns Christians of many years standing; and the caprice which rose and fell with the fashions, has now sunk into ridiculous plainness. I shall be mistaken if in a short time, there is not a veering towards the opposite point."

Such animadversions might have retarded the progress of a less determined character than Mrs. Ely; but her decision and promptitude gave wings to her faith and zeal, and enabled her to pursue her heaven-bound course with energy and power. The coldness and indifference of those "sitting at ease in Zion" saddened her heart, though it did not paralyse her efforts; and rightly viewing the oppressive weight of their influ-

ence in the church, she was unwearied in her exertions to rouse them to action. While thus labouring in the Lord's vineyard, sudden disease, as a refiner's fire, was permitted to test the genuineness of her faith; the alloy which hitherto had mixed with her holiest services was now separated; and the pure, sterling principle, "more precious than gold," was "found unto the praise and glory of God."

To Mrs. Howard she spoke with affectionate earnestness on the importance of experimental religion, and with urgent entreaty besought her not to rest any longer without its enjoyment.

Mrs. Howard candidly confessed that she was a stranger to the joy of the Christian, though she was observant of all the duties inculcated in the word of God.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Ely, "the vital part is wanting; and without this renovating change of heart, how can you

expect the inanimate corpse to breathe, move, and live? Restraining grace has preserved you from open sin; like the young man whom Jesus loved, you can say, "all these things have I observed from my youth up," and yet, "one thing thou lackest!" In some, as in myself, this divinely wrought change is instantaneous, powerful, and strongly featured; in others, it is less distinctively commenced, of slower progress, and less strikingly characterised; but in all the effects are the same—a new heart, and a new life. It is this living principle which has enabled me to run and not grow weary, to walk and not faint; and it is this, which supports me now in the season of affliction. I can smile at the daily ravages of sickness, and look death in the face with composure; yea, I have "a desire to depart," and be with Christ my Saviour.

Her malady continued to mock the power of art to arrest its progress; and

sometimes assumed a violence which shook her whole system, subjecting her to the most acute suffering. When the hour of her departure was rapidly approaching, with uncommon emphasis she repeated the language of the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." She continued saying, "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"—yes, the victory; I have gained the victory! until her spirit left the clayey tabernacle and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.

The peaceful and happy death of Mrs. Ely silenced the presage cherished by Mrs. Howard, as to the reality of the change wrought. Those principles which she expected would show the fickleness of reeds bending beneath the summer's breeze, had displayed the strength and firmness of the mountain-oak en-

during the blasts of the wintry storm; and those emotions of joy and pleasure which she anticipated would subside into lukewarm indifference when novelty ceased to excite, diffused their exhilarating influence even in the valley of the shadow of death. Her mind reverted again and again to the subject, and with clearer perception she saw the contrast between the experience she had censured, and her own. *Mrs. Ely* possessed the assurance of God's favour, while *she* only hoped in his mercy; *Mrs. Ely* enjoyed a filial confidence, but *her own* mistrusting hesitancy forbade her crying "Abba Father!" when *Mrs. Ely* was reflecting the mind that was in Christ, and was zealous in every good work, *she* misconstrued the motives and discountenanced the operations of love; and though sudden disease was the harbinger of the Bridegroom, *Mrs. Ely* was found with oil in her vessel, her lamp was trimmed, and she went forth to meet Him. Never before did

Mrs. Howard appropriate to herself the character and situation of the foolish virgins, bearing the lamp of profession, but without oil, and enveloped in darkness. Her distress arising from the discovery of present destitution and past neglect, was aggravated by the remembrance of instances, when discrediting the experience of the truly pious, and censuring their deviations from her standard of decorum, she disturbed their peace and made them stumbling-blocks to others. Stung with remorse, she bewailed her folly; confessed her sins; and humbly sought the pardoning grace of God. Nor did she seek in vain; mercy was extended; and those holy emotions which she had before censured as the effects of enthusiasm, now gave *life* to her profession, and *love* to her sense of propriety.

No. V.

PARSIMONY.

IN that assembly of Christians where a glow of hallowed feeling pervades each breast, and the bonds of brotherly affection unite each heart, is *one* observed, whose countenance beams not forth with holy joy, and whose heart dilates not with generous sympathy. Like Gideon's fleece, he alone is exempt from the dew of heavenly influence; praise ascends not from his lips; the tear of gratitude falls not from his eye; and the power of saving grace reaches not his heart. Yet he surpasses all in volubility of speech on the articles of his faith and the peculiar tenets of his creed. Loudly he boasts of his long profession in the church; with pertinacity he maintains his prerogative as an elder; and superciliously

does he look upon "those of yesterday." To doubt his charity would ensure his anathema, and to suspect his liberality would be unpardonable; although the representation of parsimony meets with the universal recognition, "thou art the man!" When the enterprising spirit of benevolence opens fresh scenes for the exercise of mercy, his gathering frown affrights the timid, and repels the bold; every proposed measure he decries as imprudent; the extended sphere of usefulness he accounts a wild, speculative project; and the ardency of Christian love, he condemns to be "zeal without knowledge." To objects of distress who petition his relief, he pleads the frequency of imposture; relates the oft-repeated tale of having been once deceived; and recommends industry as an antidote to all the ills of life. His sentiments perfectly coincide with the noble designs of those Institutions which have for their object the conversion of the world; he

longs to see idolatry and heathenism bow to Christianity, and daily does he pray, "thy kingdom come!" but dubious thoughts arise in his mind, that the funds of these Institutions are misapplied; he cannot positively ascertain whether the benefits intended be ever realised, and therefore he prefers withholding his support. His contributions for the ministration of the Word exceed in ratio his other gifts; and yet such is the scantiness of this offering, that the widow's two mites outweigh its value. In the prosperity of Zion he feels no interest, in the conversion of the world he takes no share, and in the consolations of the Gospel he does not participate.

He stands, a beacon to warn the church, and a mark for the satire of the world.

No. VI.

FORTITUDE.

“ Virtues are like shrubs, which yield their sweets in different manners according to the circumstances which surround them ; and while generosity of soul scatters its fragrance like the honeysuckle, and delights the senses of many occasional passengers, who feel the pleasure, and half wonder how the breeze has blown it from so far, the more sullen, but not less valuable myrtle, waits like fortitude to discover its excellence, till the hand arrives that will crush it, and force out that perfume, whose durability well compensates the difficulty of production.”

YOUTH is the season of expectation. It is in youth that the feelings are warm and the fancy fresh, and that there has been no blight to chill the one, or to wither the other. It is in youth that the world seems so fair, and our fellow-creatures so kind, that we charge with

spleen any who would prepare us for disappointment, and accuse those of misanthropy who would warn our too confiding hearts. The buoyant spirits will soar, till weighed down by earthly care. But the inheritance of grief is as sure to mortals, as the laws of nature are inviolable. Some parts of our destiny are less exposed, and less painful than others; yet, after every concession, life is a warfare and earth is a vale of tears. Sooner or later, affliction will come. Who has purchased exemption from accident and disease? Who is not the subject of disappointment? Who does not find in his comforts the elements of sorrow? In his affections the seeds of anxiety and anguish? It is history, it is observation, it is experience that proclaims, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit!"

We complain of the vanity of the world, but if its vanity were less, it would not answer the purpose of salu-

tary discipline. If with all its troubles, we are in danger of being too much attached to it, how entirely would it seduce our affections, if no trials were mingled with its enjoyments?

“Adversity! how blunt are all the arrows of thy quiver, in comparison with those of guilt!” It is within ourselves that misery fixes its seat; our disordered hearts, our irregular passions, our misplaced desires are the instruments of the torture which we endure. These sharpen the darts which adversity would otherwise point in vain. It is resignation which extracts the evil out of suffering; but this can only flow from a knowledge of Him who smites. Nature may yield, but it will never acquiesce, without confidence in the righteousness, wisdom, and love of God. An acquaintance with God is the only base of Christian fortitude. We may raise a superstructure towering with lofty thoughts of the perfections of Jehovah—the designs

of Providence—and the duty of submission, but like the house built upon the sand, it shakes with every wind, and is overwhelmed with every wave. Faith supplies us with a foundation for our trust. We then build upon the rock; and though “the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon our house, it falls not, for it is founded upon a rock.”

Religion does not preclude the evil day, it prepares us for it. Sufferings, which no prudence can foresee, nor care prevent, equally threaten the righteous and the wicked. “I hang the world in mourning,” is the tenour of the Divine procedure in the inscrutable ways of Providence. But in the day of adversity, religion is full of comfort and repose; like a rock firm in the midst of raging elements with sunshine on its brow, it gives a martyr’s courage to the gentlest spirit, and imparts the most cheering consolations in seasons of distress and

trouble. "Sorrowful yet always rejoicing," is the burden of the Christian's song. The foundation of moral principle and sacred hope, enables him to rise above the earth from which the visitorial discipline has loosened his affections: the inconvenient present lessens in importance; the future beams more brightly; the invisible attracts; and in hope of eternal felicity, he now patiently sustains the cross, and "endures as seeing Him who is invisible."

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted," exclaimed the Psalmist; it was in the hour of trial that Abraham's faith was "counted to him for righteousness;" it was in the season of calamity that Job's patience was displayed; and now it is that religion appears most lovely and sublime when stifling the cry of pain, and wiping the drops of anguish from the sufferer's brow; when teaching *woman* in the stillness of a sick chamber to bow her head

in patient resignation, and to endure her trials with fortitude and faith.

—They were the sweetest notes I ever heard; and I stopped short of the intended rap to listen more attentively—'T is Eliza, said my friend, observing my attention—Poor Eliza, continued he, is venting forth her sorrows, but though her voice is so melodious, the burden of her song is grating to the heart.

My friend spoke this with an accent and a look so perfectly in tune with a feeling heart, that I was instantly convinced no ordinary degree of sorrow had called forth the exclamation—

—And who is Eliza? said I.

The object of universal sympathy, replied my friend—it is not more than five years since she was basking in the beams of worldly good, now, she has to bear up under a wintry sky—

He would have proceeded, but the pause ceased which allowed of this short

conversation, and the singing was resumed—it was the same air—but drawing nearer we could distinctly hear the words :

“What though in lonely grief I sigh,
For friends beloved no longer nigh,
Submissive still would I reply,
Thy will be done !”

My friend now gave a gentle rap, and after the ceremony of introduction, we were seated by her side. She was still young, and though her features were not perfectly symmetrical, the expression of her countenance was pleasing ; she was dressed in widow’s weeds, and the marks of chastened sorrow, seen through smiles, gave additional interest to her appearance. I found my friend was no stranger to her experience ; rather was he the guide to whom she looked for counsel and direction. Her enquiries as to the path she should pursue fully told the perplexed nature of her circumstances. She said her way

sometimes appeared hedged up with difficulties—she knew not what to do—indeed she could do nothing, but trust in God.—

At this mention of her best friend, the cloud of sadness which hovered over the recital of her embarrassments was chased away—she rested her eye of confidence upon the promises given for her support, and her countenance glowing with the fervour of devotion, she emphatically repeated the language of Job, “though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

—Well, said I, you have a never-failing refuge in distress—no doubt you are supported with interior comfort in this hour of need—

“Yes,” she replied with emphasis, “though all his waves and his billows go over me, yet, is my head kept above the water-flood.”—I have no doubt, she continued, but that some wise or gracious design is to be answered by this

suffering, and if the end be accomplished—all is well.—

—All is well!—Yes, it shall be well—Farewell, Eliza! thy firm, unflinching steadfastness shall one day yield thee brighter joy.

After the lapse of years, I again saw Eliza; she had maintained a constant struggle with adversity since my former visit; and though time had blunted the edge of misfortune, the exercise of patience had been daily called forth to bear minor cares and petty disquietudes. These, as they were more frequent, were perhaps more harassing than heavier trials; at least, they equally needed the support which Christian fortitude inspires.

I found her in a solitary chamber, her frame wasted by sickness and contending with disease. She still retained the same pleasing smile mingled with sadness, but the ravages of affliction were more visible. Our interview brought

recollections of past trouble to remembrance—unconsciously did the tears suffuse her eyes, and betray the emotions of her breast—I also wept—how could I refrain nature's tribute, the sympathy of grief?

But religion gives a dignity to distress; Eliza soon recovered her former self-possession. Sorrow in treaty with death, was buoyant with hope. Her ties were severed, her fond hopes withered, her young affections blighted, yet peace was in her breast, and heaven in her eye. She comforted her very comforters, and suffered with all the majesty of chastened woe. In the sick-chamber, she gathered strength to encounter and to subdue her grief; there she learnt the proper estimate of sublunary good; there she experienced the consolations of the gospel; there she communed with God, until,

“ Meet through consecrated pain,
She saw the face Divine.”

No. VII.

EXTRAVAGANCE.

—Who would have thought that our uncle would have died insolvent? said Catherine.

—Every one who knew him, replied Edwin,—the news is sad, but not unexpected—and now our hopes from this quarter are cut off, it is for us to use economy.

The sound of the word economy was not so pleasing to Catherine as the remembrance of her uncle's splendour—

—He was so kind, so free, so open, so much the gentleman—nobody can charge him with meanness—his name and memory must be dear to every one—

I fear, said Edwin, interrupting his sister, that his memory will make the

unstained name of Clemens a reproach. You and I have different views of his conduct; yours arise from ignorance of the world, mine are formed from mixing with it.—'T is true that he was kind, his house and his heart were always open, and so far from being mean, the style of his living was profuse; but I think that consideration will not satisfy his creditors; it is more likely to irritate than to soften their feelings to know that he was liberal at their expense.

Well—but I despise the meanness of reckoning farthings, and living upon stint—replied Catherine.

'T is better to do that, sister, than to live upon charity—You seem to have no just idea of the value of money, nor of the cares which oppress my mind, lest after all my efforts, we shall not be able to maintain that appearance of respectability in which we have been educated.

What! the old subject again! said

Catherine, raising the tone of her voice—I declare, you must want me to go and work in the factory—but let me tell you, Edwin, your sister is above that—

Here the conversation ended, and a week passed without the subject being resumed. Catherine was the first to introduce it by saying, I forgot to tell you, Edwin, that a party is coming to honour your birth-day to-morrow, and I have bought a new silver coffee-pot for the occasion.

My birth-day would be more honoured by a mind at ease, replied Edwin, brushing away the tear, which in spite of his manliness forced its way into his eye; but, surely, you 've not spent the draft I gave you!

Oh, no! said Catherine gaily, only part of it, and I intend to be very frugal, and try to make your allowance last this quarter.

But what have you spent? asked Edwin, with stifled emotion—

I 've only paid for the coffee-pot, and my milliner's bill, and—let me see—something else—but I 've really forgotten what—said Catherine with manifest unconcern.

Then I am ruined! exclaimed Edwin with all the bitterness of grief—and—striking his hand upon the table—it is by your extravagance—

How!—what!—ruined!—responded Catherine—What do you mean?

I mean this—replied Edwin sternly, I trusted to that draft in the present emergency—my credit is stabbed by my uncle's insolvency—a pressure of demands has been made upon me—and small as the amount of what you have spent may be, its loss at the present moment will be irretrievable.—

In vain were Catherine's tears, her foolish regrets, and liberal ideas. She was compelled to believe that for the want of a few pounds, a stop was put to mercantile pursuits; and the morrow,

so far from being the day of hilarity and mirth, was spent in gloomy sadness, with the endurance of mortifying recriminations.

No. VIII.

SENTIMENT AND PRINCIPLE.

LUCY and Anna were bound together by the strongest possible ties—they were sisters; and a similarity of taste and pursuits strengthened the bonds which endeared them to each other. They dwelt under the same roof; equally shared the affectionate tenderness of parental regard; reciprocally cherished the love of consanguinity; and professed the same attachment to the cause and interests of true religion. No wonder, therefore, that a cursory observer should say, “they two were one.” There was, however, a material difference; a difference which affected every moral movement, and to which might be traced, according to the just reasoning of cause and effect, the peculiar features which characterised

their conduct. Lucy had the eloquence of *ideas*; Anna had the eloquence of *action*.

The constitution of mind was varied, not only as it respects the power of thinking, but also of feeling. The one felt more acutely than the other; consequently the susceptibility of the mind to impression, and its liability to vivid feeling, with equal depth of conviction, rendered the heart more excitable, and more easily influenced by the rhapsody of sentiment.

Sprightliness was the natural bent of Lucy's temper: In conversation, the redundancy of animal spirits with some fine strokes of wit, gave the smart repartee, or extricated the buoyant soul from the intricacies of thought with that lively, rash dexterity, which always pleased though it was far from being always right. Anna, on the contrary, was cast in a more serious mould: She also contributed to promote edifying conversa-

tion, but it was more by the silence of sparkling intelligence than by words; it was by a profound attention which showed that she was pleased with the subject, and by an illumined countenance which proved that she understood it.

In relation to the common duties of life, the virtues of one were *embossed*, in the other they were *enamelled*: Contempt of minute delicacies and little decorums, gave to single exceptions a prominence which solicited admiration, while the uniformity and consistency of the whole character afforded little *relief* in an individual action. Lucy affected disregard for useful qualities and domestic virtues, and only acted when her work corresponded with the ideas which floated in her mind of the beauty, the grace, the elegance of the subject. Minor punctilios, and more ordinary engagements were reserved for the less sentimental Anna, whose *principle* secured confidence in the sure performance of her task.

The enthusiasm of strong sensibility was carried by Lucy into fearful extremes. Her tastes were passions. She loved and hated with all her heart, and scarcely suffered herself to feel a reasonable preference before it strengthened into a violent attachment. Anna's less ardent temperament passed through the several stages of acquaintance, intimacy, and confidence by slower gradations ; she was more anxious to secure one friend, than to form many imprudent friendships.

At the recital of an affecting tale, the sluices of tender emotion were immediately open ; Lucy's feelings were easily wrought upon ; tears would flow apace ; and the sensibility of nature would escape in sympathetic sighs. But human misery was a subject too painful to be dwelt upon ; she would take the earliest opportunity to retire, to wipe away her tears, and to forget the distress which caused them. Anna would listen without either tears or sobs ; the appalling facts conti-

nued in her remembrance, and the claims of humanity were urged, until the sufferer was sought out and relieved.

Under the ministration of the Word, both hearts were impressed with the sacred truths, both felt the force of God's requirements; but one was wrought up to a high pitch of feeling, while the other, whose emotions were less powerful, heard with genuine faith. They returned to the world—and to Lucy, those feelings were as though they had never been; as if the reality of the subjects which occasioned them, lasted only while they were preached; as if their existence depended only on their being heard; as if truth were no longer truth than while it solicited her notice; as if heaven and hell were blotted from existence, and that eternity ceased to be eternity. Anna retired with more of calm reflection than of strong excitement. The cogent reasoning and the impelling motives were treasured up in her memory; she felt

their force long after they were uttered in the pulpit ; and the inference she deduced was manifested in a hearty surrender of her life to God.

The operative strength of principle, and not the contemplative strength of feeling, is the test of true wisdom. Any emotion, however pleasurable and intense, that does not lead to action, is questionable in its origin, nature, and result. Lucy undoubtedly possessed those fine feelings and that charming sensibility, which are the traits of real greatness of soul, in a much higher degree than the less favoured Anna ; yet the strength of *principle* effected more true elevation of character, than the delicacy, or the elegance of mere sentiment.

No. IX.

INSTABILITY.

It is said of Sir Isaac Newton, that when he was questioned respecting the moral qualities which formed the peculiarity of his character, he referred it entirely to the power which he had acquired of continuous attention. The celebrated linguist, Dr. Adam Clarke, also bore similar testimony; he attributed his rise in the scale of intellectual eminence, more to perseverance than to any extraordinary degree of mental capacity.

In the cultivation of the mind, a fixed attention is often estimated at a much lower rate than those faculties which promise a wider grasp of intellect; we hail the flights of genius, and wait with anxious expectation for the sudden

bursts of wit, but we too often lose sight of the more tardy judgment which, by slow acquirements and continued application, arrives at truth. Not unfrequently, however, do ordinary abilities, properly directed to important subjects, achieve more real greatness than higher endowments. Advancement is not made by running circles, but by a direct course to the point of aim. So a ceaseless volatility wastes superior energy on trifles, while a straight line of pursuit is marked with progress. Stability of purpose, or directing the attention distinctly and steadily to the facts and considerations bearing upon any subject which lies before it, is the foundation of all improvement of character, both intellectual and moral.

It is a trite saying, "that a rolling stone gathers no moss." A mind constantly changing its position and pursuits cannot be expected to form those habits, and acquire those principles, which con-

stitute a well-regulated mind. A calm and correct judgment, applicable alike to the formation of opinions and the regulation of conduct, is the result of settled plans of mental discipline—the cultivation of nature's rudiments; and it is in vain to look for due governance of thought in the untutored mind, or to expect culture where no labour has been bestowed. It is true, that in some instances, a towering intellect has shown its natural greatness without the aid of this mental process; the heights of imagination have astonished common capacities, and the loftiness of genius has left ordinary talents at its base; but too often has it been, that, unfixed in established principles, and having no foundation of moral strength proportioned to its intellectual vigour, its very height has caused its downfall, and the superior altitude of mind has been found amid tottering ruins. That differences exist, both in the mental and moral constitution of

man, is no argument against the necessity of continued attention to the subject which claims our consideration. Extraordinary talents are neither essential to the well-being of society nor to the happiness of individuals; yet both the one and the other are dependent upon the formation of character, and its development in social and private life. There is more piety as well as more sense in trying to improve the talents we have, than in lamenting that we do not possess more; and nothing will prove of greater efficiency towards our usefulness to others, and our own personal enjoyment, than a firm and steady purpose to regulate our hearts and conduct according to the rules prescribed by infinite wisdom.

It was a sad conclusion drawn by the Patriarch, from "the beginning of his strength, the excellence of dignity, and the excellence of power," that "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Instability makes nothing out. So far

from giving to

——— “airy nothing,

A local habitation and a name,”

it reduces the greatest excellencies to nothing. The constant diversion of powers from one subject to another, is but the waste of energy. It may indeed promise much; like the fire kindling at successive objects, the flame mounts high and soon o’ertops more sober and less daring speculation; but acquaintance with its nature need not be told that the blaze will soon be spent, and a few worthless ashes will be all that is left.

No subject has given a wider scope for diversity of opinion than the subject of religion. The plain and simple truths of inspiration have been tortured into many and fearful perversions, and the creeds of party, the modes of faith, and the forms of discipline have each had their respective adherents, tenacious of their own opinions, and zealous in propagating their own peculiar views. Human

nature is prone to extremes, and when excited, often passes from utter recklessness into the depths of mysticism, or the wild vagaries of fanaticism. Certain favourite dogmas are substituted for the fundamental principles of Christianity, the errors produced by a heated imagination receive the deference of judgment and reason, and a set of wild contradictory notions form the governance of both faith and practice.

To be "tossed about with every wind of doctrine" must be allowed by all, to be no enviable state, either for the exercise of the rational powers, or for the guidance of human conduct. The young and the ardent are particularly exposed to the danger of being led astray from the path of truth. Ingenuousness may soon degenerate into credulity, warmth of feeling into bigotry, and the devotion of life to a cloister be thought paramount to the devotion of the heart to its Creator. Enthusiasm will bear

the fancy aloft in its airy course with unresisted rapidity if not obstructed with the weight of solid good. But religion is practical as well as sublime. The Bible is the standard of truth; and majestic in its own simplicity, it condemns the subtil distinctions, and the parade of ceremony, which mark the difference of sects, and inculcates only the essential features of Christianity. Minor points are left to the determination of that charity which has its seat in the heart, which "hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things," which will retain its vital principle long after faith and hope have yielded their quota of enjoyment, and will throughout eternity disclose to the immortal spirit the beatific vision of God. No danger presents itself in aspiring to the mind of Christ. Our thoughts may roam through the scenes of our Redeemer's passion, secure and safe; our affections may be touched by the chord of sympathy, and

yield the soft emotions of the heart confiding in the Saviour's love; our desires may be elicited from their secret recesses, and breathed forth with fervour, until assured of gracious answers; and our hopes centering in the merits of our crucified Lord, are full of unutterable delights, and are the foretastes of eternal joys.

“It is a good thing for the heart to be established with grace.” When the emotions of the soul are influenced in their aspirations and tendencies by divine truth, the mind will naturally receive a bias to those essential points on which hang dependent the doctrines of saving faith. The mind and the heart act reciprocally on each other, in producing correct views of religion, and when the heart is made to *feel* the manifestations of infinite love, the mind will then experimentally *know* the plan of the divine procedure in those communications of grace. An implicit obedience to the

requirements of God's law is the best preservative against unsettled notions of religion. With the sensible enjoyment of the divine approval, is imparted the spirit of wisdom to enlighten the understanding, and the spirit of power to realise the hidden mysteries of redemption; and so long as the soul continues to follow the unerring dictates of truth in the surrender of the will and the affections to the Most High, so long will the mind be illumined in the knowledge of the revealed will of God.

Hence the cause of instability in the professors of religion is to be traced more to the deviations of the heart, than to any mental obliquity. The radical evil may be found in the non-performance of duty, which generates presumption, pride, indolence, and unbelief; these, in their turn produce darkness of spiritual vision, insensibility of heart, and a distaste for whatever is holy, just, or good; so that ere the first appearance of waver-

ing in opinion be discovered, an alienation of heart from first principles may have gradually deepened, until the opacity of error has rendered what before was distinct and clear, a mixture of darkness and confusion.

That some are more disposed to fickleness than others, will not be questioned by any observer of human nature. This may arise partly from that constant ebb and flow of animal spirits which particularly characterise the sanguine temperament, and partly, from the want of cultivating a continuous attention to the object placed before the view. Persons of a sombre cast of mind are seldom found changing their creed so as to involve the risk of losing their peculiar tenets, while on the contrary, the ardent pass briskly over intermediate steps, and frequently become advocates for opinions the very reverse of those they had previously maintained. A well-regulated mind will be less exposed to change,

than others, because the inclinations and tendencies of the character are poised by reason and good-sense ; yet, the prevailing disposition (which can scarcely be over-balanced by discipline) will present the weakness of nature, and towards that weakness the force of temptation will be directed.

No. X.

SLANDER.

——— 'T is slander

“ Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose
tongue

Outvenoms all the worms of Nile ; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world ; kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons, nay the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ NOTHING is so swift in its progress as calumny ; nothing is more readily sent forth, nothing is sooner received, and nothing more widely diffused.” This remark of the Roman orator is equally applicable to the present state of society, as when the censor exercised his power of inspecting the manners, and animadverting upon the vices of the people ;

for, notwithstanding the moral change which Christianity has effected, it continues a lamentable proof of man's depravity, that the ear is ever open to receive evil tidings, and the tongue is still employed in publishing scandal. Few individuals, however obscure their station, are permitted to glide through life without having to contend with the opposing force of undeserved reproach: this bound Joseph in fetters, and caused David to exclaim, "false witnesses are risen up against me, they laid to my charge things that I knew not."

It not unfrequently happens that this moral deformity assumes the mask of candour and the guise of friendship: "the smiler with the knife under the cloak," lulls suspicion by feigned goodwill, and then inflicts a mortal stab; "the words of his mouth are smoother than butter, but war is in his heart; his words are softer than oil, yet are they drawn swords."

Falsehood and detraction usually lend their baneful assistance to secure the most effectual method of slandering by *misrepresentation*. In most transactions there are certain parts which may be easily separated from the whole, and so artfully presented to view when thus detached, as to assume the appearance of evil ; whereas, if they were permitted to remain with the entire transaction, in their own place, and be exhibited in their own proportions, little or nothing would be discovered censurable. The following story may serve for an illustration.

It was a calm and peaceful evening, and the setting-sun mingled his rays with the light fleecy clouds that sailed along the sky, when Henry Dryden left his usual occupation as clerk in a merchant's office. Unconsciously did he bend his steps homeward, and tread the threshold of his door, when the greeting of his

widowed mother roused him from his reverie. He took his accustomed seat by the cheerful fire-side, and partook of the frugal meal in silence; for he feared to communicate the intelligence which weighed down his own spirits, to her whose gentle mind and delicate constitution could feebly sustain the ills of life. At length his quivering lip and clouded brow were earnestly watched by the steady gaze of maternal solicitude; the knitting was thrown carelessly aside; and her clasped hands rested upon her knees.

“What ails my Henry?” she enquired with a tremulous voice, which convinced him that concealment was no longer expedient.

“You need not be alarmed, mother,” he replied, “my spirits are low this evening, caused by a circumstance which affects my situation.—Mr. Spencer has failed, and therefore my services are no longer required. For months

past I have anticipated it, so that my mind was in some degree prepared for the intelligence; and yet, my nerves received a shock they have not yet recovered.

“But what shall we do now?” asked Mrs. Dryden with anxious concern, “you know Henry, the last year’s salary is nearly gone.—O that I could be no longer dependent upon my child!”

“Nay, mother, say not so—still shall you share in the profit of my labour; and I have no doubt but that my character and abilities will soon procure me another situation.”

Henry experienced that sorrow lessens by participation; for having divulged the cause of his uneasiness, the natural buoyancy of his mind assumed its wonted position, and presented the fertile field of futurity to his imagination. Soon did his thoughts wander into the regions of probability, where the prospect of successful enterprises floated in

airy visions before his fancy. While thus lost in musing, his attention was arrested by the arrival of the following letter :

SIR,

I can offer no apology but the feelings of a father for thus addressing you. No doubt you well remember your old school-fellow Edward Price, my eldest son. I need not expatiate upon his conduct since the time he left school ; suffice it to say, he has lately involved me in considerable difficulties by gambling. At length I succeeded in persuading him to go abroad, thinking it the most likely method to disentangle him from his companions. With this intent he left home for your Port a few days ago. I have since been informed he has not yet left his native land, but is again associated with the Billiard-Room. Will the favour be too great, if I request your influence to wean him

from the ruinous course he is pursuing, and see him in the first vessel that sails out of your harbour? By so doing, you will ameliorate the anguish of a tender mother, and confer a lasting obligation on

BENJAMIN PRICE.

“Remember Ned! aye to be sure!” exclaimed Henry after reading the letter, “full well do I remember his honest, good-natured heart, and mischievous pranks—but no time for reflection—I must save him from ruin.” Rising hastily from his seat, and eagerly seizing his hat, he paced rapidly from his dwelling, nor paused even for a moment, until he stood before the illumined entrance to the scene of fraud. Having ascended the steps, the kindness of his disposition, the tender recollections of boyhood, and the generous impulse which prompted this errand of benevolence, vanished before the consideration of his

danger in thus mingling with the refuse of society. Never before had his feet trod the precincts, or his name been associated with the frequenters of the Billiard-Room. Conscious of his unsullied reputation, his strict integrity, and his undeviating morals, he hesitated whether to hazard his fair-fame to the clemency of a censorious world by proceeding, or abandon his early companion to the villany of his confederates and the ignominy of his career. Wavering as to the path he should pursue, he was recognised by Charles Spencer, the youngest son of his late employer.

“Welcome Dryden! I have not seen you here before!”

“Nor would you now, Sir,” replied Henry, “but that I am in search of an early friend, whose name is Price.”

“Price is within that inner room—fortune has frowned upon him to-night—but come, try your skill—the fickle goddess may give you smiles.”

“Never, sir, will I engage in a practice which my soul abhors.”

“You have been held long enough by your mother’s apron-strings—now for once play the man; and let me see, whether you can relinquish your cowardice.”

“I am unshaken, sir, in my resolution never to stray from the path of rectitude. Will you favour me with an introduction to my friend?”

Spencer complied, and Henry silently observed in this nocturnal assembly, the dark o’ershadowed brow meditating revenge—the flashing eyes and raised voice of anger, breaking out in vehement epithets—the anxiety of deep-laid villany, lurking in secret recesses, ready to pounce upon the unsuspecting prey—and the self-complacent exultation of the prosperous. In the midst of a wily group, sat Price, elated with the prospect of recovering his lost property. Wholly absorbed in the interests of the game, he heeded

not the admonitions of friendship, and turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of kindness. Neither the solicitude of affection, nor the efforts of ingenuity succeeded in disentangling him from the snares into which he had plunged; and it was with an aching heart, that Henry left his early companion to the fatal consequences of his conduct.

Now was the malevolent disposition of Charles Spencer supplied with materials for the cruel delight of defamation. Long had he waited for an opportunity of wounding the reputation of Dryden; but the consistency of his life always repelled the insinuations he had given. This visit to the Billiard-Room afforded ample scope to misrepresent; an expedient to which he resorted, convinced that falsehood interwoven with truth is most injurious, as its specious covering escapes detection. With a heart thus bent on mischief, he watched for the chosen period, when the slander might

prove exquisitely painful, and irreparably injurious. Such an opportunity soon occurred; his father, roused to exertion by the humiliating circumstance of his failure, now paid that attention to his concerns, which had it been previously bestowed might have saved his name from the Gazette. Mistakes and errors were quickly detected in the books belonging to the counting-house; from which it appeared obvious that cash to a considerable amount had been clandestinely withdrawn from its proper source. Suspiciously inclined by the state of his affairs, Charles found little difficulty in suggesting, that, "as Dryden frequented the Billiard-Room, it was probable the deficiency might have gone towards paying debts of honour."

"Dryden, did you say!" exclaimed Mr. Spencer, "surely he is a honest man! if not I shall never trust another."

"I cannot accuse him of dishonesty," replied Charles, "though were he to be

in your employ again, it would be well to be upon your guard."

"Dryden must be incapable of treachery! my confidence in him cannot have been misplaced! he appears so strictly upright, that you can have no foundation for your conjecture Charles."

"I have often been surprised father, that you have acted so credulously towards him; all my attempts to remove your prejudices in his favour have been in vain. His demure look and hypocritical face would make you believe it impossible that he should be a gambler; whereas I have the most unquestionable authority in saying, that he went to the Billiard-Room the evening he left your service."

"Indeed! can that be proved?"

"Most certainly, sir, by a dozen witnesses—Parnham is one of the number."

"I still think there must be some mistake which I will endeavour to rectify

by questioning Parnham; it appears incredible that Dryden can be a gambler—but should he have betrayed my confidence in this respect, he may have done in the other also; for he has had abundant opportunity.”

Mr. Spencer was frustrated in his attempts to exonerate his favourite clerk from the aspersions which rested upon his character, by the circumstance of Parnham having previously left the Port for a voyage of considerable length; while the slander acquired additional strength by the daily insinuations of his son Charles, and the inexplicable state of his accounts. By imperceptible degrees did the baneful leaven infuse its noxious properties, until his naturally lenient disposition was imbued with its deleterious influence, and his confidence exchanged for mistrust and suspicion. With a mind thus prejudiced, when resigning his effects to his creditors, he incautiously expressed his fears, that the

confronting state of his books could be imputed only to the fraudulence of his confidential clerk.

With the fearlessness of conscious integrity, Henry Dryden applied for a responsible and lucrative situation under Mr. Howitt, a member of the Society of Friends, and the chief creditor of Mr. Spencer.

“How canst thou expect it, young man,” said Mr. Howitt, “when thy late master has given me leave to think thou art a gambler and an embezzler of his property?”

“What! a gambler! and embezzler!” exclaimed Henry—he could proceed no further—his feelings choked his utterance—his voice failed—every nerve was paralysed—and he stood motionless, rivetted to the spot.

Mr. Howitt added, “if thou art not afraid of thy conduct being investigated, thou mayest come here to-morrow, when I expect Mr. Spencer.”

“ I ’ll dare the severest scrutiny,” replied Henry, with an air of unusual boldness.

Interrupted by the presence of a stranger, Henry returned home, to wait with anxiety the termination of the intervening hours. It was a memorable day—never to be forgotten. The alternate feelings of hope and fear influenced his heart, and increased the painful nature of suspense. Never did sentence of condemnation fall heavier upon the criminal, than did these false and cruel charges upon him; they weighed down his heart as if its veins were filled with molten lead; the iron entered into his soul; and he sought where to weep—but could not. Accustomed to prize a good name more than riches, the sensibility of his nature suffered the agony of a wounded spirit, whose glory the blast of obloquy had turned into shame, and whose honour it had laid prostrate in the dust. But when thus tortured with

the sufferings of mental anguish, his conscious integrity yielded its reward of interior comfort; and his faith in the righteous government of the Divine Being claimed the promise, "not a weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee, thou shalt condemn." Thus preserved from sinking into despondency, by the poize which only virtue and piety can supply; he hailed the rising sun, and hastened to the spot, where the desolating tempest burst with violence upon his head.

Mr. Howitt was prepared to receive him. Prepossessed in his favour, and moved with compassion at the surprise and anguish manifested the preceding day, he determined to trace the accusations to their source. With his characteristic acuteness of penetration, he satisfactorily discovered that they only originated with Charles Spencer; and as he had been previously detected, during

the examination of Mr. Spencer's affairs, preferring charges against the innocent for crimes which he himself had committed, this additional instance of baseness stamped the seal of infamy upon his name for ever.

Elated with joy, Henry expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the friend, who had rescued his name from disgrace; and pledged his honour that his fidelity to him as a master should run parallel with his services. The responsibility of the situation into which he now entered, repelled the arrows of calumny which had been hurled at his reputation; while his undeviating uprightness secured the confidence and esteem of his employer.

No. XI.

HUMILITY.

“ Humility the sweetest, loveliest flower
That bloomed in Paradise, and the first that died,
Has rarely blossomed since on mortal soil.
It is so frail—so delicate a thing,
'T is gone if it but look upon itself;
And she who ventures to esteem it her's,
Proves by that single thought she has it not.”

CAROLINE FRY.

HUMILITY is the loveliest trait in the Christian character ; it subdues the warring passions of the human breast ; preserves a calm serenity of mind amid all the ills of life, and prepares the soul for intercourse with God. Every other virtue is confined in its operations by states and circumstances, and many lie altogether concealed from mortal eye from the want of an opportunity to display their graces. Some virtues are only seen

in affliction, and others in prosperity; some in private life, and others in a public situation. Thus the fortitude of a martyr, or the meekness which endures provocation, cannot find sufficient scope for exercise in the flourishing times of Christianity, or beneath the sheltering arms of friendship. But humility has an unlimited extent, it knows no restrictions. The Christian is equally sensible of its influence on the mountain-top rejoicing in the fruition of delight which the visions of eternity inspire, as in the vale below, pressed down with trials, and the subject of temptation.

It is this virtue which counteracts the workings of pride. Self-exaltation generally excites disgust, frequently offers insult, and sometimes inflicts pain. Nor is it less cruel to others than to its possessors; for the axiom is true, inflated ideas betray vacuity of mind. Conceit precludes learning, and they who boast of their attainments will generally be found

upon investigation, to possess the least. Pride “puffeth up,” but “with the lowly there is wisdom.” Humility by its silent yet effectual operation, subdues the haughtiness which scorns reproof. With a tendency to think lowly of present attainments, and to point out defects, rather than dwell on excellencies, instruction becomes effective, and obedience is ensured.

In the present day, when the graces of the Christian character are universally admired, many persons flock to the standard, enlist under the banner, and become faithful adherents to *feigned humility*. They discountenance the ostentatious display of vanity, and endeavour to conceal its deformity by affected humiliation. To a superficial observer, the shadow may be considered the substance, and the spurious be denominated genuine; but it requires little discrimination of judgment to determine whether the fair-form be a descendant from the skies “sent

forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation," or the wily serpent in the semblance of an angel of light. Humility employs no trumpeter and unfurls no banner; but in deep retirement silently carries on the operations which counterwork the effects of pride; self-valuation diminishes in importance and is lost in that poverty of spirit which participates in the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven; the irregularity of passion submits to the mild influence of peace, and wisdom governs with unresisted sway. Humility is the calming of the tempest, the serenity of the mind, the rest of enjoyment, and the earnest of heaven.

A survey of the immensity of God's works in the universe by which we are surrounded, is calculated to bring down every aspiring thought of man's importance, and reduce him to an insignificant creature unworthy of the regard or notice of his Creator; especially, if contemplation dwells on the intellectual and moral

perfection of pristine innocence from which he has fallen, into the numberless and awful obliquities of depravity. Sin has tainted every faculty of the soul, and laid the world in ruins. A just conception of our real state cannot fail to produce the self-abasing exclamation of Job, "behold, I am vile!"

When the lofty superstructure of pride is thus laid low, its site forms a good foundation for building with the lively stones of faith, hope, and love, a temple unto the Lord. Humility represses the irregularities of youthful zeal; it gives a proper impulse to the cowardly spirit which preserves it from sinking into passive tameness, submitting alike to truth and error; and it promotes the growth and establishment of those excellencies which yield a rich reward. Without it, firmness is obstinacy, and faith presumption; religion itself appears but enthusiasm, and the most active and useful members of society are qualified to

be the leaders of faction or the agents of vice. Exceeding great and precious are the promises given to the humble in the Scriptures: they are invited to the footstool of mercy, encouraged by the assurance of support, and enriched with the communications of grace.

Amelia is a lady of good-sense, learning, and piety, commanding respect, esteem, and love. Yielding in early life to the operations of divine grace, she devoted the bud of her youth and the bloom of mature years to the service of her Creator, and now exhibits the precious fruit of age fast ripening under the smiling beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Raised to the possession of wealth and influence, she allows others to share in the benefit, and confers obligations without expecting any acknowledgment. She sacrifices her own ease and comfort in order that happiness may be diffused on a more extensive scale; and

instead of pertinaciously clinging to her own opinions, she willingly acquiesces in every plan of usefulness dictated by others, when reason gives the preference. Tell her of one who is advanced to honour, she rejoices and gives her blessing; relate a tale of woe, she sympathises and relieves; describe a scene of contention, she pours the balm of peace and prays. To her superiors, she neither speaks with the voice of flattery, nor is abashed, but expresses herself with modesty; to her equals she is sincere and kind, neither seeking distinction nor detracting from another's merit; to her inferiors, she is condescending, and bestows her favours with discretion that sensibility may not be wounded. Her enjoyments are sweetened by that cheerfulness which participates in the innocent diversions and praiseworthy emulations of her children, while she aptly represents experience guiding the steps of youth to virtue and religion. Unassu-

ming in her demeanour, she neither displays her possessions nor courts attention ; but when many around are contending for applause, she silently receives the public homage, and returns it in acts of kindness and benevolence.

But Amelia's humility is not confined to external evidence ; the heart is the chief scene of its operations, and there it unveils its glory. Though sensible of unworthiness and imperfections, she reposes with confidence on the love of God through Jesus Christ ; all irregular passions are hushed into a holy calm, and the peace which passeth all understanding pervades her breast. With the eye of faith she perceives the beauties of holiness, not remote and indistinct, but attainable and adapted to her wants ; the act of faith claims the promises of the gospel, and while relying upon those demonstrations of good-will, she exhibits the power of divine grace, and reflects the moral image of God.

As ears of corn, ripening for the harvest, bow their heads nearer to the ground, so it is with Amelia:—the nearer she advances to her eternal rest, the more humble she becomes. Her Christian graces having reached their full growth, are receiving the golden tinge of perfection, and waiting in patience the appointed hour when she will be gathered into the garner of the Lord.

No. XII.

INCONSISTENCY.

How many there are, who by the non-conformity of their lives with the religion they profess, present an enigma to the world, which reason cannot solve, nor charity approve! They entertain the most profound veneration for the attributes and perfections of the Divine Being, and are frequently lost in wonder and admiration when contemplating his character, and the manifestations of his designs; but while they worship and adore, they fail to partake of his nature—love. The display of unbounded beneficence in procuring and adapting means for the comfort, happiness, and salvation of man, is a subject to them most interesting, as it opens to their view, glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life; the theme

is dwelt upon with delight ; but the inference is not deduced, “ if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” With reverence do they speak of the holy law of God ; “ it is just, and right, and good ;” strongly do they insist upon the strict performance of all duties contained in the summary command, “ thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” but the second, “ thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” is forgotten, despised. The will of God is professed to be the rule of their lives, yet upon every occasion are they ready to substitute their own ; when required to “ sell what they have, and give to the poor,” the response given is a determination to gratify taste, conform to custom, and make a display ; when the prohibition is given “ lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,” it meets with violation in bonds, title-deeds, and investitures ; and when the test of discipleship is tried by their love one to another, selfish inte-

rests, covetous practices, and unlawful deeds are discovered. Christ as a Pattern, is the object of their professed imitation, yet do they neither bear his image, nor copy his example: impelled by love *He* voluntarily took our nature, and became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" the demands of selfishness exempt *them* from suffering, and they live in luxury, pomp, and ease; *He* gave his life for the redemption of the world, *they* barter the salvation of souls for the gratification of their own desires. With zealous ardour they "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," but its evidence by works, is set aside as naught: when a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, they say, "depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," notwithstanding they give not those things that are needful to the body. In opposition to the self-denial of the Apostle, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ," they

make the profession of religion further their secular interests. And though they talk loudly of their own accountability, and profess to be responsible for the proper use of their possessions ; yet are they unhesitatingly secured “to them and their heirs for ever.”

Well may the name of Christian be contemned, since they who profess to know God, in works deny Him !

No. XIII.

PROCRASTINATION.

THE disposition to postpone may be termed a delusive medium, which diminishes proximate and important objects, but which accurately defines and magnifies the remote and indistinct specks of probable or contingent circumstances. The present time with its certain advantages, is looked upon as less likely to secure the accomplishment of an object, than the more distant future ; while that which requires promptitude and despatch, is deliberately reserved for the convenience of a leisure hour.

In the transactions of business, the indulgence of this propensity is attended with most serious consequences. Opportunity is the flower of time, and if it be not quickly gathered, it withers and dies.

The history of each individual furnishes some particular point, some definite period, at which delay becomes ruinous both to character and proceedings. "Always too late," detracts from the respect due to the possession of other good qualities. No dependence can be placed upon a person marked with this characteristic: his promise, his word, his honour are questionable; if he makes appointments they are not considered obligatory, his services from being out of season are valueless, and ere the better feelings of his heart converge to some direct point of good, they are lost amid the claims of neglected duties. It is surprising that the disquietude occasioned by the multiplication of cares, does not remedy this evil; for what was omitted to be done at its proper moment, arises to be the torment of some future season. If you meet such a person he is in a hurry, he has not time to speak, he is going elsewhere; and when he gets there, he is either too

late for his business, or he must hurry away to another before he can finish it. His days and years are filled up with a confused and irregular succession of unfinished transactions, and though he is always busy, he can give no account of the business which has engaged him. Religion, he thinks, may properly employ leisure and occupy old age; but though both advance towards him with perceptible step, he is still at a loss to determine the precise period when the leisure is sufficient, or the age enough advanced. It recedes as the destined season approaches. He continues to intend moving, but he continues to stand still.

When the indulgence of procrastination has been confirmed by habit, it requires the most constant vigilance to detect and oppose its force. Without a firm resolve, every day will add to the number of those already past, in which duty, pleasure, and profit have been made

to yield subservience to its rampant sway; the judgment may be convinced of the evils resulting from its practice, and the occupations of each day may suffer from the burden of unperformed duties, which by-gone opportunities have left; but although reason, conscience, and experience cry aloud, "Be wise to-day; it is madness to defer!" another, and yet another weight is added to the load, destined to overcharge the morrow.

But direful as are the effects of procrastination in connection with the affairs of this life, they are nothing in comparison of the importance they assume when relating to the concerns of eternity. The *soul* then suffers the weight of loss. To delay repentance is to ensure everlasting punishment; to put off the time of reconciliation, is to seal our own eternal doom. This view of its enormity is seldom seen in its true colours; yet the truth is not lessened by partial perception, any more than the final consequence

is mitigated by sceptic doubts. "Go thy way for this time," has, in a multitude of cases, checked that light and influence upon the mind which would have issued in eternal salvation; and it is to be feared the number is beyond computation whose everlasting destruction may be attributed to procrastination. A total neglect of the **concerns of the soul** is by **no means** intended; religion appears desirable, and it is the settled purpose of the heart to embrace its doctrines and receive its truths; but the subtil enemy presents the specious idea that a more convenient season waits on the morrow: the conviction of what is right yields to the false guidance for its attainment, and the object considered necessary, is left to the vague and indefinite *sometime or other*. Presuming temerity is not the proper groundwork for a holy life; the heart that can throw aside the overtures of mercy to a more favourable opportunity, is not likely to esteem the "pearl

of great price;" and the Holy Spirit, quenched in its first operations, cannot reasonably be expected to revisit the soul with the influence before contemned. No dawn of hope gilds the horizon of that mind which can wilfully protract the night of moral darkness. Of all sinners, they are the worst, who deliberately continue in sin that grace may abound.

A striking illustration of this subject is found in the history of Harriett.

When youth gave bloom to the fair countenance of Harriett, a natural inertness kept dormant that energy of character which would have given tone to the amiable qualities of her heart. For want of greater promptitude, the gentleness of her disposition sank into passive tameness of spirit, submitting alike to truth and error; and the indulgence of a listless inactivity consigned peculiar advantages for improvement to the ennui

of a leisure hour. It is true she spoke with fluency of her "numerous engagements," her "want of time," and the "importance of her services;" but had her employments been measured by their utility, her life had been contracted to a span, and her name become a blank. She might indeed at all times be denominated *busy*, for the least trifle in her hands assumed the consequence of a weighty affair; the whole apparatus of labour was required to form a design, hours were consumed in deciding upon an immaterial point; and ere half the project was accomplished, the incitement or the time had expired, and more pressing duties called for a similar display of ineffective means. Her undertakings all shared the same uniform fate, of having the finishing stroke reserved for the convenience of the morrow. She was literally busy in doing nothing.

The characteristic of Harriett's mind biased her conduct towards the subject of

religion. It required neither argument nor persuasion to gain her assent that it was the "one thing needful;" and sometimes the sensibility of her feelings were so moved, that the starting tear would evince the sincerity of her acknowledgment. But the idea of becoming a follower of the Lord was the farthest from her thoughts; indeed, she did not trouble herself with thinking; she was not one of those who meet trials by too much anxiety about the future; the present time was all she cared for, and her mental ease was not to be disturbed with forebodings of what might never happen. The season of old age or a sick-bed was the time appointed to seek forgiveness, and so long as health continued and youth promised many years to come, she perceived no cause for alarm.

It was in this state of mind that fever seized her frame, and in its wild delirium days and weeks were passed. At length reason resumed her seat; but

it was only to know that a few minutes would terminate her earthly course. A shriek of horror too fully told the truth, how little she was prepared for death. "I have put salvation off—too long!" exclaimed the dying girl, with all the bitterness of grief, and in the mournful accent of despair. Parental affection strove to mitigate the agonies of the last hour, by applying the promises of mercy suited to her case;—she answered not, but with a look so full of anguish and dismay that it cut all present to the heart. Again was she encouraged to rely upon the merits of her Redeemer.—The power of speech had failed; she laid her hand upon her heart, and shook her head as if her doom was irrecoverably fixed.

The wheel was fast breaking at the cistern—she grasped convulsively the hand of a friend—returned it, as if unworthy of regard—looked piteously around—and then closed her eyes for ever.

Alas ! poor Harriett !
Thy brief career, and mournful end, are
told in the warning admonitions of thy
monumental stone :

Procrastination is the thief of time.
Year after year it steals, till all are fled ;
And, to the mercies of a moment, leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.

No. XIV.

ENVY.

“Some other passions may be turn’d to good,
But Envy must subdue, or be subdued.
This fatal gangrene to our mortal life,
Rejects all palliatives, and asks the knife:
Excision spared, it taints the vital part,
And spreads its deadly venom to the heart.”

MRS. HANNAH MORE.

THE words envy and emulation are frequently used as synonymous, yet a little attention will discover their meaning to be different and their effects distinct. Envy is pain felt at the sight of excellence; emulation is a desire for superiority—Envy precludes happiness; emulation is intent upon its increase—Envy employs a thousand devices to conceal its deformity; emulation openly declares its ambitious character—Envy begins its work at

a remote distance, and with shy, perfidious attacks, wounds dangerously and lulls suspicion; emulation raises the standard of its achievement at the onset, and with sincerity dares the contest—Envy has only private, selfish aims, and uses every artifice to make them succeed; emulation often fixes upon noble acquisitions and pursues them valiantly:—disgrace and infamy await the detection of envy; shouts of applause invigorate emulation. Aristotle allows that some emulation may be good and may be found in good men; yet envy he utterly condemns as wicked in itself and only to be found in wicked men.

The object to be desired may put the spirit of emulation to the test. Envy never covets virtue; it may indeed pine for the esteem, the influence, and the delight which it procures; but never does it sigh for virtue itself. To emulate superior moral excellence must therefore be laudable, because every degree of ad-

vancement will be attended with that real greatness of soul which destroys envy and diffuses happiness around. Thus the Apostle exhorts the Corinthians to a holy emulation of the charity of the Macedonians in contributing to the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Although envy is universally execrated as the worst of vices, and the suspicion of its existence in the heart, insults the most depraved ; yet how frequently does it discover its workings, not only in the malevolent, but in the apparently amiable. Subtil and insinuating, natural benevolence of disposition and flexibility of will, prove no barriers to its entrance ; and though the restraints of education and the principles of moral rectitude may check its force, they fail to suppress its risings. “How often is a little infirmity pitched upon and deplored with no other motive than to discredit and disparage that sterling excellence with which it happens to be associated :

the speck is pointed at and magnified, perhaps with a look of sorrow and a tone of lamentation, but only to draw off public attention from the lustre which is admired and envied." *

It has been observed, that a representation of the disquietude and vexation which the envious continually experience, is calculated to make a deeper impression upon the mind than the best definition or counsel that can be given on the subject. No apology is therefore needed for introducing the following characteristic story :—

After a month's tour, Frederic Douglas with his bride was fast approaching the wealthy town of D——. It was a calm and peaceful evening, and the sun's beams, though departing for the night, still preserved a sufficient portion of light and warmth to give beauty and animation to the surrounding scenery. The gentle

* J. A. James.

lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep just penned in their folds, and the hum of insects softly broke upon the ears of the travellers, and served rather to increase than lessen the serenity that pervaded the face of nature. Contemplation thus invited, maintained an unbroken silence, and restored in revived imagery reminiscences long since forgotten. Frederic recognised with renewed emotions the familiar objects of by-gone days—there was the little hamlet, the residence of his nurse, and the extent of his early walk—a little further he surveyed the mound where his kite took wing, and the meadow which witnessed his expertness with bat and ball. The recollections of boyhood occupied his attention until the landscape of nature gave place to works of art, and the rattling of the pavement reminded him that congratulations awaited his arrival at the family mansion. Thoughts of a more sombre aspect weighed down the naturally buoyant spirits of Mrs.

Douglas. She cast a longing, lingering look upon relatives and friends whose adieu still echoed in her ears and rent her heart; and the possibility of being disappointed in her expectations of conjugal felicity, drew a veil of gloom over the opening vista of futurity. With an anxious eye she gazed upon the buildings as the carriage wheels passed rapidly along, wondering which she might call her own, until the stopping of the vehicle before a house bearing the marks of recent improvement, indicated that she had now arrived at her future residence. An affectionate welcome soon chased away the forboding fear of feeling a stranger at home, and restored her usual vivacity. In obedience to custom, the first few weeks were spent in receiving and returning visits, which afforded an easy ingress into the circle of new connections and friends.

It did not escape observation, that Mrs. Douglas's introduction excited the

scornful glance of Miss Gordon, the daughter of a respectable citizen, with whom Mr. Douglas had been for many years on terms of friendly intimacy. The courtesy due to a stranger checked in some degree the rancour previously cherished towards the unknown rival, who had been successful in gaining the desired station; and the civilities of social intercourse partially concealed the mortification and envy attendant upon disappointment. But the seeds of evil are too prolific to remain long buried without putting forth their shoots, and Miss Gordon plied her ingenuity in order to ascertain the particulars respecting the family of Mrs. Douglas. In this she so far succeeded as to learn, that though they possessed wealth and influence, an uncle some years ago was a bankrupt, and her mother's maiden name declared affinity with a well-known character who was tried for forgery. With the industry and perseverance which would have done

credit to a better cause, she "tacked their every error to her name," and published abroad the circumstances most likely to ensure reproach. Affecting the language of sympathy, she lamented that the disgrace which was so justly due to the delinquent, should extend to succeeding generations, and with apparent simplicity she expressed her fears, lest some unforeseen calamity should be inflicted on the present race, as a punishment for the sins of guilty ancestors.

Notwithstanding the varied effects of detraction which were employed to undervalue Mrs. Douglas, the public, unbiased by prejudice, still expressed the customary deference to superiority of rank and station; while her intellectual endowments and general suavity of manners, secured the voluntary concession of pre-eminence in the more immediate circle of friends and acquaintance. Miss Gordon was once compelled to witness the

happy effect which the cheerfulness of her conversation had upon the social-party, where, free from suspicion, she indulged her natural sprightliness in facetious remarks and unusual volubility. The whole company participated in the glow of pleasure which beamed from her countenance; every eye sparkled with delight; and every tongue was ready to utter the praises of affability and good-nature. But the sway of a rival increased the virulence of envy; and the expansion of generous minds into cheerful vivacity, contracted the malignant and gloomy reserve. Miss Gordon's feelings were no more in unison with the rest, than the animated discourse was like her sullen silence. Irritated and vexed, she was meditating an abrupt departure, when the attention of the company was directed to her, by a lady asking, "what subject occupied her thoughts so intently, as to cause such absence of mind?"

"Silence does not always betray absence of mind," replied Miss Gordon, "Addison found it much easier to draw bills of large amount, than to discharge the continued demands of trifles with petty-cash."

"If all were mere spectators," said Mr. Douglas, "the best grace of wit would be quickly buried in gravity, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots."

"I have been forcibly reminded, Sir, this evening, of the saying of the wise man; 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.'"

"It is equally true, Ma'am, that pleasant words are sweet as honeycomb; and if *you* think fit to be silent and serious, I hope *we* may talk and smile without offence."

"Volubility," replied Miss Gordon, "is a common foible among my own sex, into which too many are led by a fondness for display."

“ You must pardon me Ma'am for saying that in thus exposing the weakness of others, you are tacitly commending yourself. For my own part, I think a regular flow of good spirits far preferable to alternate fits of loquacity and taciturnity.”

Mortified but not changed, Miss Gordon withdrew from the scene of her invidious attack, and like an enemy in ambush, watched for the favourable juncture when her darts might more effectually wound. In the mean time various skirmishes kept alive the splenetic humour and cherished the ignoble desire of witnessing superiority laid prostrate and self exalted. With hints and ambiguities she wrapped as with a funeral pall, popular opinion and esteem; or with mute malevolence and a significant shake of the head, discredited the report of excellence and blamed the unsuspecting for credulity. She pitied those who could spend in luxury what would prove

subsistence to a fellow-creature; and the passing of her rival's carriage never failed to provoke the remark, "that many better born did not disdain to walk."

As one of the officers of the Bible Society, Miss Gordon was deputed to solicit the aid of Mrs. Douglas as a collector; who, fully acquainted with the nature of the work, by having been previously engaged in the same capacity, and duly appreciating the importance of the object, cheerfully gave her consent; but stated it would be impossible for her to attend the monthly meetings, they being held at the time of her usual dinner hour. To obviate this difficulty, Miss Gordon proposed to become her representative to the Committee, which offer was thankfully accepted. Accordingly, the following month, Mrs. Douglas detailed the particulars of the various incidents she met with in re-canvassing the district, and sent her report and sub-

scriptions at the appointed time to Miss Gordon, who was to convey them to the meeting.

With eager curiosity Miss Gordon unfolded the paper and examined the bag committed to her trust ; her jealousy was again re-kindled at the successful labours recorded, and the interesting facts stated in the report, which being written in a pleasing, animated style, would, she well knew, excite attention and secure praise. Imagination painted in glowing colours the probability of these facts being copied into the yearly report and thus become extensively circulated ; or, perhaps, they might be related at the approaching public meeting, adorned with all the charms and graces of eloquence. This was a painful and bitter thought ; she tried in vain to search for a defect that would in some measure prove a counterbalance to the merit which added poignancy to her vexation ; and after pondering

for some time on the possibility of averting the expected commendation, one way presented itself to her notice as the most likely to escape detection and fulfil her wishes. She could readily imitate the hand-writing and transcribe on another paper the leading features in different language. This was a bold expedient, yet its danger seemed to diminish at a second glance; and with a fixed purpose to encounter the risk, she commanded as steady a hand as the perturbation of her spirits would permit, and commenced the work of fraud. It required some dexterity to elude suspicion, yet the cunning of the serpent was adequate to the undertaking; every sentence was stripped of its ornament and artfully constructed to be harsh, flat, and insipid; and as a farther detraction she cautiously inserted a few orthographical errors, which, though not prominent, were sufficiently conspicuous for the scrutinising eye of the secretary to detect.

Exulting in the success of her stratagem, Miss Gordon beheld the forged report, without remark classed with others as unworthy of record or attention. With complacency she returned to her station in ambush, to watch the openings of future opportunities when her contrivance might undermine and destroy those ramparts of excellence which encircled the object of her malevolence.

As the time of the annual meeting of the Bible Society drew near, in consequence of the severe indisposition of the secretary of the ladies' association, Mrs. Douglas was requested to adjust the accounts preparatory to their being audited by the general secretary. Searching for materials out of which to compose the yearly report, the mutilated facts with the counterfeited hand-writing and signature, presented their mysterious aspect. Surprised and astonished, Mrs. Douglas remained for some time unable to account for this strange dis-

covery ; until the recollection of former expressions of ill-will irresistibly fixed her suspicions upon Miss Gordon. Though exercising candour, she possessed too keen a sense of right and wrong to view with indifference an artifice so mean, and conduct so base and dishonourable ; suspending her censures, however, until the circumstance should be more fully developed, she repaired to the monthly meeting, determined, if possible, to ascertain whether her conjecture was well-founded. During the usual proceedings of the meeting, Miss Gordon instinctively shrunk from Mrs. Douglas's observation ; for she found something particularly painful in her earnest and penetrating gaze. Why she was thus uneasy, she could scarcely explain to herself, for it did not appear at all probable that the slightest suspicion could be entertained of her late treachery ; yet the unexpected presence of Mrs. Douglas was embarrassing, and in spite of her utmost

efforts she felt agitated with the dread of a disclosure. Her fears were at length verified, by Mrs. Douglas stating that she was surprised, in looking over the reports, according to the request of the committee, to find her own for the last month wanting, and that one bearing her signature with mistakes and other defects was placed in its stead ; she had already mentioned the circumstance to the secretary, who was quite ignorant of the affair, and wishing to have it further explained, she now applied to Miss Gordon, the bearer of her bag, for the information she desired.

With a quivering lip and tremulous voice, Miss Gordon replied, " I took the liberty of reading your report, Ma'am, and having misplaced it at the time, and recollecting the particulars, I sent one of my own writing as a substitute."

" I should not have expected one so imperfect from your pen," returned Mrs.

Douglas, "especially as those with your own signature are free from the like errors."

Miss Gordon, whose blanched cheeks and downcast eyes betrayed the consciousness of guilt, continued silent: for she now perceived the path she had chosen to be a perplexing maze, and the farther she advanced, the more she would be involved in the intricacy of its labyrinth.

"Perhaps, Ma'am, ere this, you have found the original?" asked the treasurer.

"I will send it you," replied Miss Gordon, who, struggling in vain to regain her usual composure in the midst of spectators to her disgrace, abruptly left the room.

According to promise, the report of Mrs. Douglas was sent to the treasurer; who, considering the facts narrated calculated to be useful, fulfilled the apprehension of Miss Gordon by having them,

with the collector's name, inserted in the yearly report.

At the public meeting, one of the speakers acquainted with the circumstance, after describing the adaptation of the gospel to the wants of fallen man, lamented that any should be found professing to know and estimate its value, by assisting to spread its sacred contents, who were yet strangers to that love which it unfolds and inculcates. It was indeed cause for regret that the foul passions of the human breast, should like strange fire and diseased offerings be brought to the altar of the Lord; envy, jealousy, deceit, and falsehood had desecrated the holy service, and obtruded on hallowed ground. The Bible, he continued, contains the antidote to this perversion of the Society's object: "charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not

easily provoked ; thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

No. XV.

PREJUDICE.

THE period in which we live has been styled "a liberal age." In the great marts of commerce liberal ideas are afloat, liberal subjects are discussed, and liberal measures are proposed. The whole teeming population partake of the spirit of liberality which has spread, or is spreading, into every thing interesting to human nature. The mind becomes unusually expanded to comprehend the length and breadth of those improvements which are presented to its notice; and it anticipates that when these designs are accomplished, still nobler projects will call forth its admiration. The future is accounted big with importance; and in the eager desire for mighty achievements, the distinctions of sect and party, with the different

grades of rank and wealth, are partially lost: the nobles of our land are found in conjunction with the humble artisan rearing up the pride of national glory.

But we are apt to presume upon the extent of this spirit of liberality. The distance of a few miles frequently manifests an astonishing difference in the tone of feeling towards an object, which demands the same support from the town of genteel resort, as from manufacturing districts. Where continual intercourse is not maintained with places of greater importance, the state of isolation precludes rapid improvement; and the inhabitants, perhaps aware of the distance which leaves them far behind, adhere with the utmost pertinacity to their own standing usages and laws. A simple instance will serve for an illustration: A lady, after having suffered much jolting in riding over the rough and broken pavement of a country-town, expressed her surprise to an inhabitant, that the

streets were not M'Adamised: with an air of boasted precedence the reply was given:—"We could not do with that plan; it would not suit us!"

A gentleman, identified with the spirit and manners of a large commercial city, found that retirement from mercantile pursuits in the secluded town of C——, was less congenial to his feelings than he anticipated. He had not calculated upon the disparity existing between his own enlarged views, and the confined ideas of those religious friends with whom he now associated. It were in vain for him to expect to model the different classes of society upon his own plan, which was a century in advance; nay, he was compelled to recede to the times of his forefathers, and acquiesce in those contracted opinions and views which he had imagined were long since buried in oblivion. If he attempted to take the lead in any benevolent undertaking,

so as to form the individual items of charity upon a scale commensurate with the public good ; he was surprised with numberless objections which possessed neither weight nor force, save in the prejudices of those by whom they were urged. Or, if he succeeded in gaining a few proselytes to his views, again was he thwarted in his designs. The bane of caste limited the operations of his colleagues to their own immediate circle of friends ; they would not stoop to solicit superiors, nor would they deign to co-operate with inferiors. He sought by familiar intercourse to remove the barrier of rank and station which kept the members of Christ aloof from each other ; but the cordial salutation was met with a look of astonishment, and the expression of wonder could not be repressed, that " he, a gentleman, should stop and talk with people in trade ! " It mattered little that the wealth and influence he enjoyed had been acquired

by trade, or that the whole of his family and connections were at that time immersed in business. He must conform to the custom of the place, however at variance with his own feelings, for he found that his friendly visits were the cause of more disquietude than pleasure. For the mental improvement of the junior part of the society, he proposed the formation of a library, and contributed liberally towards its support. On all sides was he assailed with the almost forgotten dogma, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing;" with the utmost gravity did the ladies recapitulate their household grievances since Sunday Schools had spoiled their servants; and ere the project was accomplished, his name was notorious as the anticipated author of crime. The opposition thus given, did not arise from personal animosity, much less from a general hostility to that which is good. They might be called well-meaning persons, and also disposed to be charitable;

but they were prejudiced against any and every method which did not originate with themselves. No promise of greater utility could secure their support to any thing affecting the alteration of their own plans. "They would be sorry to credit any new-fangled notion. What had answered for the past generation was equally applicable to the present." Even hired Teachers for the Sabbath School, were preferred to those who voluntarily offered their services without fee, for the very ostensible reason—it was the custom.

No. XVI.

WORLDLY SPIRIT.

THE world is one of the three great opposing forces, against which the Christian has to contend. We deceive ourselves not a little when we fancy that what is emphatically called *the world* is only to be found in this or that social condition. The world is every where. It is a nature as well as a place; a principle as well as a local habitation and name. If it be true what Calvin says, that "every man has a king within him," it may with equal truth be said, that every man carries a world about him.

The particular circle of each individual may be denominated *his* world; beyond that circle, little or no influence is felt. Of no consequence is it to the plebeian what constitutes the fashionable

world ; his own contracted round of duties exert much greater power over his mind than the more extended sphere ; *his world* relates to the various menial occupations which demand his labour, and the stipulated reward of his services. Similar distinctions may be drawn in every class of society.

The world presents gratifications on a scale large as its circumference, and adapted to the states of its numerous inhabitants. To some, the gross scenes of sensuality possess the captivating charm ; all beside is blank ; to run the giddy round of vice is the height of their desires, the end of all their plans. To others, who respect the decorums of society, who connect ideas of personal comfort with public esteem, of generosity with credit, of order with respectability, public opinion is the breath by which they live, the standard by which they act. To the ambitious, visions of future greatness are presented ; life is spent in

climbing up the steep of fame ; at every point of fresh ascent, other towering summits call for renewed ardour, and the promised prize is still seen glittering far-beyond. The love of gain is perhaps the most attractive object in the grand panorama of the world ; the golden tinge of its enchantments is as congenial to the natural vision of the mind, as the green surface of the earth is to the bodily sense of sight. Youth beholds with longing desire the brilliant display of its gorgeous palaces, mature years are spent in exploring its secret mines, and old age adds to the already overgrown heaps of sordid ore. Diversified as the temperament of mind and the circumstances of individuals, so is the varied aspect of the world. Scarcely has one view failed to please, ere another shows its alluring baits, and a quick succession of enjoyments present their false but specious lustre to dazzle and decoy.

None can be found, from the po-

lished courtier to the rude barbarian, who recognises not either an enemy or a friend in the world. In this recognition lies the distinguishing characteristic of the righteous and the wicked: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." It is impossible for the principles of religion and the policy of the world to coalesce. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

The possession of worldly good, however, forms no distinctive mark of character; there are those who "have all and abound," who are yet, notwithstanding, peculiarly favoured with the approbation of God, while others, miserably poor, are designated "lovers of the world." The characteristic is not formed by external circumstances, but by the internal flow of desires and affections. It is in the heart that the evil exists in its true form; there it is, that God is robbed of his glory, and earth is loved, worshipped, and adored.

A worldly spirit cannot be considered a little infirmity, a natural and therefore pardonable weakness, or a trifling error which will be overlooked. It is in fact, the essence of all other faults; the temper which stands between the soul and salvation; the spirit which is in direct opposition to the spirit of God. Individual sins may more easily be cured, but this is the principle of all spiritual disease. It is seated in the heart, and that is the place in which it must be combated. It is in vain to attack it in the suburbs when it is lodged in the citadel. Mere forms can never expel an evil which they can never reach. If it does not appear in the grosser forms prohibited in the Decalogue, still it will exist. The shape may be altered, but the principle will remain. He who ventures not to break the letter of the first commandment, will violate it in the spirit; for though he dare not bow before an idol, he worships his possessions. He

who has not courage to renounce heaven by profligacy, will yet impiously attempt to push the world through the needle's eye.

“Be not conformed to this world,” is the divine behest. Nor is the prohibition left to influence the heart unassisted and alone. It is accompanied with the eloquence of entreaty, it is followed by the calmness of expostulation, and it is enforced by the austerity of punishment. With what solicitude does Jehovah caution men to “beware of covetousness!” With what tenderness are they invited to “set their affections on things above!” And when they turn a deaf ear to the remonstrances of love, how does the sterner voice of the law forbid the indulgence of their desires!

It may be asked, how is it possible to live in the world, and not be conformed to it! That it is practicable, is sufficiently evident from the command; the Almighty exacts no more from

his creatures than they are able to perform. Infinite wisdom and love are sweetly blended with the authority which enjoins the command; for not only is our submission to his righteous sway manifested by its observance, but our present and eternal interests are thereby furthered. Inseparably joined is the denial of lesser good with the display of greater good in reversion. The negative prohibition is succeeded by the positive requirement: "be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds;" "look not at the things which are temporal, but at those things which are eternal;" "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." We are not debarred from giving full scope to our affections. Religion animates, purifies, and elevates the most refined emotions of the soul; it links earth with heaven, the heart with its Creator, and the spirit with eternity.

While the customs and manners of the world are subject to such continual change, it is impossible, in the minute transactions of life, to draw a line of demarcation which shall at all points meet its eccentric course. Neither is it practicable to give direction alike suitable for individual peculiarity and the different degrees of social relation. The turn of many an important step must necessarily rest upon the decision of individual judgment. Some things, apparently innocent, which neither assume an alarming aspect nor bear a dangerous character; things which the generality of Christians affirm to be safe for them, are yet injurious to others: they abate their love for religious exercises, or infringe upon the time of their performance; they engross their thoughts with secular concerns, or draw their hearts more closely round the world. It is an important end to discover where our hearts are most assailable, and which are

the strongest tendencies of our character. It matters little to us that others can allow practices with safety, if by that allowance we are enthralled. If we are too apt to grovel upon earth, instead of soaring aloft; if our besetments lie in the indulgence of the pleasures of sense, let our own unbiased judgment determine our opinion, let our own experience decide for our own conduct.

Behold that amiable and interesting youth! The frolics of boyhood are subsiding into more rational enjoyments, and the ardour manifested in scholastic duties is turned towards professional honours. When the susceptibilities of nature are thus warm and tender, "My son, give me thine heart," is powerfully applied unto his mind; he listens to the voice of God; he yields obedience to the divine requirement; and he turns his feet unto the testimony of the Lord. Fair bud of promise! May thy open-

ing folds develope only the principles of truth and virtue ! As yet, anticipation is realised ; each succeeding year witnesses his increased devotion to the service of God ; he becomes one of the church's brightest ornaments ; and his character in the world is stamped with " whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." To avert evil, Providence opens the way for his entire dedication to the cause of Christ, and he experiences the inward moving of the Holy Ghost. But now, he begins to hesitate, and plead the flattering nature of his worldly prospects. " Let the dead bury their dead ; follow thou me ;" is spoken to his heart ; again he pleads for exemption from this self-denying service, and vows to consecrate his substance to the Lord. To appease the clamours of conscience, he offers the first-fruits of all his increase ; to propitiate divine mercy he presents a broken and a contrite heart ; but to the demand of personal sacrifice,

he cannot, no, he will not yield, and his blooming hopes and expectations are withheld. By degrees, the tone of his piety begins to abate; the fervour of his zeal languishes and dies; prudential reasoning checks the benevolence of his heart; self rises in importance; the friendship of the world is courted; worldly policy begins to operate; and the possession of wealth is coveted. At length, the enchanting scene of affluence, arrayed in all its varied charms, is suddenly presented to his view; the golden prize of his ambition, with but the forfeiture of rectitude, is within his grasp. Captivated with its lustre, and eager to possess the object of his desire, he stretches forth his hand, and is startled at the warning voice of God:—"They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." Awed by this admonition, he hesitates and reflects. Conscience accuses

him of having in spirit, if not in profession, departed from the simplicity of the gospel; memory recalls the time when he rejoiced in a sense of God's favour; and experience shows his besetting sin, and forebodes future evil. He now sees, that the express command of God forbids the indulgence of his desires, and that the path of safety is enclosed within the prohibition of his law. Thus arrested in the pursuit of unlawful gain, he perceives his late retrograde movements in the path of piety; he feels the oppressive weight of the sin which led him astray from God; and with bitterness he exclaims, "oh! that it were with me as in days and in months that are past!" But yet, his sorrow leads him not to forsake his evil ways. Still does he make the better feelings of his heart subserve his worldly interests. The alluring bait is again placed before him, dazzling in splendour, and exceeding its former greatness.

While surveying its charms, the love of gain increases in force and strength ; the temptation is urged, “ what thou doest, do quickly ;” it is responded to by the inclinations of his heart ; and without time for reflection, he openly violates the command of God—disgraces his profession—and forfeits his reputation.

“ The love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

No. XVII.

PRIDE.

“No one venerates another’s self-majesty!” exclaimed a lady, suffering from the insolence and contempt of the proud and prosperous. The remark was just; for though pride is inherent in our nature, and every unrenewed heart must be conscious of its existence, yet is the expression of it always ridiculous, which no one tolerates beyond his own personality.

Seldom has the history of real life been more dazzling than that of Marianne’s. Raised from an obscure and humble station, by a quick succession of fortune’s smiles, to influence and wealth, she excited no less the envy than the wonder of many whom she left in the vale of poverty. Nor was she alto-

“The providence of God was presented to Ezekiel under the image of a vast wheel; the design of which was to show, that its dispensations are constantly changing. For as in the motion of a wheel, one spoke is always ascending, and another descending, and one part of the ring is grating on the ground, while another is aloft in the air; so it is with the affairs of families and individuals—they never continue at one stay.” *

A sad reverse of fortune whirled Marianne from the giddy height of prosperity into the depths of misfortune. Her spirits now sank into fearful despondency. As she had never anchored her enjoyments in the truths of religion, her mind found no interior support in adversity. She wept and wailed like a child. Her felicities were wholly dependent upon the world, and when that began to frown she was enraged at its

* Legh Richmond.

mutability, and mortified at her own degradation. The prospect of her old age being reproached, neglected, and obscure, was insupportable, though still affording the retirement and tranquillity which many covet as the best solace for declining years; but an utter want of sympathy with privacy, made it appear joyless, wearisome, and irritating. She continued to grasp at the last wreck of fallen greatness, with a spirit unsubdued, and a heart burning with indignation so long as nature could endure the contest. When unpitied and unlamented, she left the changing scenes of time for an unchanging eternity.

No. XVIII.

CONVERSION.

A CHRISTIAN ! How sublime and comprehensive is this title ! The importance and interest attached to the distinctive or combined associations of country, kindred, and sect, are lost amid the more transcendent glories, the higher honours, and the more endearing relationships embodied in this name. It is intimately connected with the dignity and excellence, the condescension and love of the founder of our holy religion ; while it serves to express what is pure and heavenly in the religion itself, with all that is beneficial and happy in its operations and effects.

But it may be asked, in what does Christianity consist ? The answer is simple and comprehensive :—the mind

of Christ. It is the mind of Christ which rejects with holy scorn the alluring baits of earthly gratification ; it is the mind of Christ which receives with meekness, contumely and reproach ; it is the mind of Christ which is intent only upon accomplishing the work of salvation ; it is the mind of Christ which sacrifices all for the benefit and conversion of the world. The mind of Christ is the effaced image of God restored upon the soul of man ; on it is bestowed the divine encomium, “ behold it is very good ! ” and by it man regains the original dignity of his nature, he talks and walks with God.

Preceding this exaltation of character, a change is wrought which affects the relation in which the individual stands towards his Maker. The returning prodigal is met with the pardoning kiss, and welcomed to his father’s house ; the weeping penitent receives the assurance of forgiveness, and goes in

peace. But with this there is also a change which affects the dispositions and affections of the heart; what was once loved is now avoided as repugnant and injurious; and what was once neglected is now esteemed and sought with the utmost solicitude.

This divinely-wrought change is the only basis of Christian character. Education may do much in restraining the violent and visible actings of the corrupt heart, yet it proves its inefficiency to eradicate any one of the diseases of corrupt nature. The antidote required is the impartation of a new principle, not the regulation of an old; a creative, and not a mere controlling process. Nothing is a substitute for the converting grace of God. "Grapes will not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles;" neither do we find the fruits of the Spirit in an unregenerate heart. No sooner, however, does the work of grace commence, than it is manifest; it blends

itself with actions, circulates through duties, gives vitality to exertions, and diffuses its secret yet hallowing influence through the entire circle of individual operations. Of little consequence is it, *how* the mind is affected with saving truth; the importance rests upon the actual fact of conversion. Of no avail will it be to trace the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of others, if we have not the assurance of our own interest in the covenant of grace.

Religion is personal, both in its operations and effects. Diversified as are the leading traits of Christian experience, yet do they all centre in being—a believer in Christ Jesus; varied as are the degrees of influence which truth exerts upon the mind, yet we find in all the effects are the same—a new heart and a new life; and though divers measures are used by the Holy Spirit to make its operations bear upon differently constituted individuals, yet do they all

converge to one point—the salvation of the soul. The doctrines of grace are vital, penetrating, and transforming; they are not only directed to the understanding, but they are influential on the heart; not only do they embrace the world, but they display the tenderness of infinite love meeting each peculiar state with appropriate help.

The experience of one is marked by the storm; another is drawn by the influence of love; while a third hears and obeys “the still small voice.” Quick and powerful were the means used for the jailer’s salvation; by the “terrors of the Lord” was Saul stopped in his errand of persecution; and the “heart of Lydia was gently opened to attend unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” Various also are the means employed for accomplishing this mighty change. Sometimes the merest trifles lead to results the most momentous; a look, a word, is accompanied with a

power which carries conviction to the sinner's breast, and the destiny of eternity is dependent upon circumstances apparently insignificant. Frequently the truths of inspiration become the spirit of power and life: threatenings, precepts, and promises are applied with a force which makes the stout-hearted tremble, and of the careless it is said, "behold he prayeth!" But more generally is the ministration of God's word owned in the conversion of sinners: of Zion it may be emphatically said, "this and that man was born in her; the highest himself shall establish her; the Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there."


The particular mode of divine communication to the soul is replete with interest, since it displays the peculiar manifestations of the attributes of Jehovah identified with the personality of a humble individual. Christian experience, though coinciding in all essential points,

varies in the delineation of those features which constitute genuine conversion. In tracing these outlines, we discover different expressions of the same character ; we see the grace of God cast, as it were, into different moulds ; and we infer from the various modifications of that grace, that our own peculiar state forms no barrier to our receiving the blessings of salvation.

Mrs. Lomax was early initiated in the follies of a fashionable life, and freely indulged the natural vivacity of her disposition in those amusements generally considered innocent. Though pursuing pleasure with avidity, she experienced the inadequacy of earth-born joys to afford solid comfort or substantial happiness ; the days of her youth and many of her riper years, had been spent in grasping shadows and following phantoms ; disappointment and ennui succeeded her anticipations of the concert

and the ball-room, while a series of engagements presented their false lustre, dazzling and decoying her enslaved affections. When thus glittering in the sun-beam of worldly enjoyment, and like the butterfly sipping at every flower, she accidentally discovered "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion" in her possession. Curiosity prompted her to read it; her attention became arrested; her mind enlightened; and the book unfolded to her perception, subjects new, strange, and impressive. She began to examine herself, and discerned that she was a total stranger to Him, with whom, beyond all others, she ought to have been acquainted. The vain thought arose, "I have lived morally; can I have any thing to repent of?" But the veil was rent asunder, and disclosed thoughts, words, and actions, ranging themselves in array against her. She enquired into the prevailing passions of her heart, and found them to be

pride, ambition, and an insatiable thirst for pleasure. This discovery rendered former amusements insipid and condemnatory. She endeavoured to rise above the unusual mental depression it had occasioned, but the more she strove, the more it increased. Accustomed regularly to attend the services of the Establishment, and deeply entrenched in prejudices against any sect or party without its pale, she now so far overcame her scruples, upon being informed that "a gentleman and a scholar" was expected to preach in the neighbourhood, as to express her determination of entering the unconsecrated temple. The night was dark and windy, and seemed exactly to comport with the gloomy and tempestuous state of her mind, while the sanctuary, with its open doors, invited the weary and disconsolate to the asylum of peace and repose. The winning aspect of the minister, the sublimity of the hymn of praise, and the devotional spirit



which pervaded the congregation, hushed to peace the agitated mind of Mrs. Lomax, and enabled her calmly to listen to the truths of inspiration. In the sermon, sin was presented to her notice in its terrible deformity and fearful consequences; Jesus Christ was exhibited in the charms of his person, and in the exalted and endearing forms of a Saviour, whose sacrificial offering had procured pardon, and made satisfaction for a guilty, perishing world; the way of salvation by faith was explained; and the humble penitent encouraged to expect the forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God. Never before had she understood the doctrines of the gospel, or perceived the harmony of the divine attributes; she embraced the offers of mercy, and rested her confidence in that demonstration of good-will, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Immediately did she experience "peace

and joy through believing ;” her “ faith was counted to her for righteousness ;” and the “ Spirit bore witness with her spirit that she was a child of God.”

It could not be expected that a change so important should long be kept secret from the partner of her joys and sorrows. Mr. Lomax for the first time beheld incontestable proofs of true conversion. With a mind verging towards scepticism, he had always looked upon the profession of regenerating grace as the cant of hypocrisy, or the effect of enthusiasm ; but he now saw that the manifestations of vital piety sprang from a nobler source than any which had hitherto gained his credence, and he found he could not reconcile those holy dispositions which influenced his wife’s conduct either with imbecility of mind, or delusion.

The character of Mr. Lomax may be drawn in those few expressive words, “ a man of the world.” The world was

the idol which he loved, worshipped, and adored. Its maxims with him were settled principles, and its favours sought as the chief good. It is true, the world had rewarded his service with honour and wealth; but the gnawing worm was at the root of his gourd: a gradual decay of strength reminded him of his mortality. Mrs. Lomax's attempts to set before him an object more worthy of his affections, met with repulsive coldness; his happiness centred in earth; and with the charge of cruelty he said, "if ye take away my gods, what have I more?" By degrees, however, he became familiarised with the truth, that death was not far distant; he lamented his folly in wasting life in the pursuit of that which afforded no solace in the hour of need; and he began seriously to think of preparing for another state. "Mine is a lost life!" he would exclaim, and then sink into a state of mental sullenness, which neither partook of com-

fort nor yet of despair. But the virulence of disease allowed no longer time for deliberate conclusions. The destiny of eternity required immediate decision. Hourly expecting the awful summons, and forced from the last lingering wish for life, he saw the world wherein he trusted recede from view, and he felt at every pore the severing stroke. Nor was this all, aroused fears presaged a coming judgment; unbelieving doubts were chased by the clamours of an awakened conscience; a sad catalogue of crimes called for vengeance; and the flying shaft, hurled by the grim monster, was on its way to consign the guilty sinner to his eternal doom. The infinite importance of his situation, and the conviction of the necessity of crowding the concerns of his soul into a moment, without strength, without time, with a clouded memory, a disjointed reason, and a wounded spirit, intolerably augmented the sufferings of the body which

stood in little need of a distracted mind to aggravate its torments. At that dread moment prayer was heard—mercy interposed—a sight of Calvary was given—and the dying testimony was left, “A sinner saved by grace!”

The consolation afforded by an assurance of acceptance with God, proved the antidote to excessive sorrow; Mrs. Lomax bowed with Christian submission to the afflictive stroke. One pledge of conjugal love now claimed attention; maternal solicitude rested upon Thirza.

Possessing a natural amiableness of disposition, and remarkable docility of temper, she presented a fair surface of character, on which the impress of the divine image might be fully drawn. Mrs. Lomax highly prized these omens of future excellence, and with unwearied diligence guarded their perversion. The extension of the promised blessing unto her offspring was steadily kept in view; past success encouraged her importunity

at a throne of grace ; and the readiness with which her daughter engaged in religious exercises led her to hope that ere long she would see the evidence of true conversion. For this manifestation of zeal and ardour for her child's salvation, Mrs. Lomax was truly commendable ; but as the frailty of human nature is perceptible in the most renewed heart, infirmity was mixed with her holiest desires. She substituted her own experience for the Word of God, to test the genuineness of the work of grace. A more correct judgment would have seen the impropriety of expecting a youthful heart under proper discipline, and in which the traits of moral excellence were found, to feel the same degree of compunction as the gay worldling ; neither was it reasonable to suppose that the truths of the gospel, gradually dawning upon the mind from earliest infancy, should produce the same powerful effect as a sudden introduction into light, after

a night of moral darkness. The silent tear, the love of retirement, and the frequency of prayer were only looked upon as the harbinger of more visible signs. The *time*, the *place*, with all the attending circumstances of conversion, were held forth as the indubitable seals of pardoning mercy; and the ecstatic joy which followed, was considered tantamount to the "spirit of adoption." The gentle heart of Thirza did not dare to question her mother's capability of giving instruction in the way of righteousness; but readily yielded to the decision that as yet, she "had neither part nor lot in the matter." Greater discernment of character would have hailed her as "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." It is true, her repentance was not marked with poignancy of grief: infinite love did not thus expose the shorn lamb to the piercing blast; a milder course was used, and "thou God seest me!" laid her soul

prostrate in the dust—she did not dare to sin. Neither did she ever experience the rapturous emotions of transporting joy; her placid mind was not formed either for great mental depression or sudden bursts of excitement; in learning the sacred lessons of His grace, who was meek and lowly of heart, she found rest unto her soul; and though with mistrustful hesitancy she held back from the assurance of adoption, yet was the love of God shed abroad in her heart, and she enjoyed a calm and settled peace. The truths of God's word fell upon her tender spirit like dew upon the opening flower; hers was eminently the religion of holy love; and with the most cheerful surrender she sacrificed all for Christ. It was not long that Mrs. Lomax could see the development of Christian graces without recognising the work of God. She lamented that error in judgment should have "quenched the smoking flax" instead of fanning it into a holy

flame; and in order to atone for past distrust, she now held forth the privilege of "the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." Thus encouraged, her daughter laid claim to being an heir of heaven; with filial confidence she cried, "Abba, Father!" and in her future life, walked worthy of the vocation wherewith she was called.

"So I may thy Spirit know
Let him as he listeth blow;
Let the manner be unknown,
So I may with thee be one."

No. XIX.

EMULATION.

ALTHOUGH different degrees of intellectual and moral power distinguish different individuals, yet it is certainly within the compass of each individual to aspire after something beyond the indulgence of mere animal gratification. It is entirely unworthy of a sound and well-regulated mind for the attention to be engrossed solely with transient objects. We display the strength of our judgment by apportioning our time and attention according to the relative value of those subjects which claim our consideration. The ordinary engagements of life necessarily occupy a large portion of our thoughts; literature and science also claim our regard; but another state of being is paramount in importance—

the interests of eternity demand our *attention*. To secure everlasting bliss is the end of knowledge; to seek to live for ever is practical wisdom.

Each individual has the choice of being distinguished by an ascendancy or a fall; each may be the jewel or the clod. The human soul may become a mirror reflecting the divine perfections. Religion expands the mind, exalts the faculties, refines the taste, elevates the character, sanctifies the affections, and in its sublimer range it gives a nobility and an aspiration which link earth with heaven, the soul with God, and time with eternity.

There is no cause for our partaking of the curse pronounced upon the serpent. We need not lie prostrate upon the earth, and feed upon the dust. The promise of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life is given. It is ours to rise from a state of degradation; it is ours to recover the purity, the holiness

of the forfeited image of God ; it is ours to enjoy the pleasures, the delights, the felicities of heaven. Why, then, should life be spent without the exercise of our judgment, the decision of our choice ? Why grovel in baseness instead of rising to eminence ? Why consume upon trifles that which would secure realities ? Shall we prefer sordidness to glory, ignorance to illumination, and extinction to immortality ?

It is not because piety has no attraction that we slight her offers. The young and the amiable are peculiarly sensible of those beauties and excellencies which adorn her character ; they ingenuously acknowledge that “her ways are ways of pleasantness,” they involuntarily yield the sympathy of their hearts to her sacred touch. The aspiration of nature tends to celestial joys. But *mere sentiment* is not the groundwork for a holy life. Human depravity is too deep to be dislodged by tender emotions.

Evanescent desires cannot be expected to produce the fruits of the Spirit. A fixed determination is wanting. A steady purpose of mind is the foundation of right principles and conduct. To decide for God, and to abide by that decision, are the terms of discipleship.

Of little avail is that goodness which as the "morning cloud and the early dew" passeth away. Of little weight in the balance of the sanctuary, is that sensibility of the heart, excited only upon particular occasions. Those impressions which are too transient to be profitable, only serve to render the heart more obdurate or more deluded. That degree of religious feeling which has discernment enough to distinguish sin but not firmness enough to oppose it, compunction sufficient to soften the heart but not vigour sufficient to reform it, is slight, yet so far as it goes it will bear the test of truth; but if this be rested in, rather than a vigorous appli-

cation of Christian principles, it will gradually lose the power of spiritual perception and feeling, and ultimately end in a callous indifference, to which the value of the soul and the destinies of eternity are alike unimportant.

We cannot stand upon neutral ground. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," is as applicable at the present moment, as when Elijah called upon the thousands of Israel for immediate decision. If we decide not; we have decided. Satan himself corroborates the truth:—

"Worshipping not God, makes thee my worshipper."

It is not enough that we show our preference for that which is good; the force of the decision rests in our adherence to the object of our choice; "if the Lord be God, follow him!" Instability makes nothing out. Those fits of promptitude, which as so many starting points, mark

the repetition of the first step, and also the retrogression of many individuals, are not worthy the name of resolutions. A steady purpose of the mind to decide, and to abide by that decision is required. On this depends the interests of eternity.

The greatest strength of judgment, the highest power of reason, is expressed by the right use of the little monosyllables *yes* and *no*: When the importance of the soul claims attention, and the manifestation of infinite love calls for the surrender of the heart, a voluntary affirmative presents the accepted offering; and when the temptations of the world obtrude upon the notice, promising a rich repast of earthly gratifications, the bold negative is put upon the thoughts and passions, denying the pleasures of sin. But though a point of determination is signified by the simple adjustment of a few letters, it comprehends all that is great, wise, and good.

Resolution bears upon its wings the sublimest ideas of the human soul; objections do but serve to stretch its pinions; the first rising may be sometimes checked by the lowering cloud of mistrustful imbecility, but the fixed purpose will penetrate the darkening shadow, and espy beyond, the desired object resplendent in the beams of truth. A steady gaze will give the power of approximation, and in the sublime height of real greatness, we see the issue of a *firm-resolve*.

